

NEW ZEALAND  
AND THE  
LEAGUE OF NATIONS

---

A thesis  
presented for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy in History  
in the  
University of Canterbury  
by  
Gerald Chaudron

---

University of Canterbury

1989

THESIS  
JZ  
2015  
.C496  
1989

CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	iii
List of Illustrations	v
List of Abbreviations	vi
Preface	vii
Introduction    The 1919 Paris Peace Conference	1
Chapter 1       New Zealand's Foreign Policy Structure	23
Chapter 2       Sir James Allen at the League, 1920-1926	47
Chapter 3       Security, Arbitration and Disarmament, 1920-1925	75
Chapter 4       'An Imperfect Instrument', 1925-1928	115
Chapter 5       New Zealand Battles With the Second British Labour Government, 1929-1931	139
Chapter 6       'Playing in the Air With the Angels', 1930-1935	169
Chapter 7       The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict, 1935-1938	210
Chapter 8       The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939	259
Chapter 9       The Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939	298
Chapter 10       Reforming the Covenant, 1936-1939	328
Chapter 11       New Zealand and the Permanent Mandates Commission	374
Epilogue	423
Conclusion	429
Appendix       The Covenant of the League of Nations	438
Bibliography	451

## ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses New Zealand's relations with the League of Nations from its inception in 1920 to its dissolution in 1946. Beginning with the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, which created the League, the study traces the development of New Zealand's relationship with the Geneva body from an indifferent, sometimes hostile, Massey Government in the early 1920s, to the detached acceptance of the Coates and Forbes Governments in the late 1920s and early 1930s, through to the passionate support of the Savage Government in the late 1930s. The final chapter is devoted to New Zealand's sometimes prickly association with the Permanent Mandates Commission, the League body which supervised New Zealand's administration of the mandate of Western Samoa.

The importance of this study lies in its extensive use for the first time of government department files covering the whole period of New Zealand's involvement with the League. This has revealed that because New Zealand's external affairs were handled by Britain in the main, this relationship with Geneva was trilateral rather than bilateral. Even under Labour, which pursued from 1935 a more independent line in League affairs than previous governments, the policies of Britain and the Commonwealth continued to exert a powerful influence over New Zealand's policy.

Yet this did not mean that New Zealand governments of the 1920s and early 1930s accepted British League policy without question, especially where imperial security was concerned. Indeed, one of the main con-

clusions of this thesis is that while Labour was more outspoken at Geneva, it was not the first New Zealand government to take an active interest in League affairs.

Another point to emerge is that Labour's strong support for the League and collective security was not simply an idealistic policy based on international morality. Rather it was seen as a practical alternative to appeasing the Fascist powers. But the Savage Government also recognised that there were limitations and thus New Zealand confined its views to disputes before the League and it never directly opposed Britain in a League vote.

Yet if policy was determined in Wellington, New Zealand's image at Geneva was dictated by the personalities of its representatives to the League; the High Commissioners in London. Their activities in the Assembly and the Council, and their relations with New Zealand and British ministers and officials, are at the heart of the story of New Zealand's involvement with the League. They made a vital contribution to the development of an independent international identity for New Zealand through the League. This was despite the fact that most New Zealanders were uninterested in the League and that New Zealand governments did not deliberately seek a status separate from the British Empire. Thus the real importance of the League was its role as a catalyst for New Zealand to begin developing its own foreign policy.



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Carl Berendsen (Alexander Turnbull Library)	27
Sir James Allen (S.P. Andrew Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)	48
Sir Francis Bell (Schmidt Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)	97
Sir James Parr (Schmidt Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)	125
Sir Thomas Wilford (S.P. Andrew Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)	150
William Jordan (Alexander Turnbull Library)	226

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AJHR</u>	<u>Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives</u>
BED	British Empire Delegation
<u>BPD.HC</u>	<u>British Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons</u>
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
<u>DAFP</u>	<u>Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49</u>
<u>DBFP</u>	<u>Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939</u>
<u>DCER</u>	<u>Documents on Canadian External Relations</u>
DO	Dominions Office
Dom	Dominion
FO	Foreign Office
<u>FRUS</u>	<u>Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States</u>
GGNZ	Governor-General of New Zealand
ILO	International Labour Organisation
<u>LN</u>	League of Nations publication
<u>LNOJ</u>	<u>League of Nations. Official Journal</u>
<u>LNPMC</u>	<u>League of Nations. Permanent Mandates Commission</u>
LNU	League of Nations Union
nd	undated
<u>NZPD</u>	<u>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</u>
OSC	Office of the Secretary to the Cabinet
PM	Prime Minister
PMC	Permanent Mandates Commission
PMD	Prime Minister's Department
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
Sec-Gen	Secretary-General of the League of Nations
SS	Special Supplement of <u>LNOJ</u>
SSCols	Secretary of State for the Colonies
SSDA	Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs
U-SS	Under Secretary of State

## PREFACE

The third and fourth Labour Governments pursued foreign policies during the 1970s and 1980s which put New Zealand at odds with several major powers. Comparisons have been made with the days of the first Labour Government during the late 1930s when New Zealand opposed the appeasement policies of the Western democracies in the League of Nations. The generally-accepted view is that the Savage Government was the first New Zealand government to develop its own foreign policy, while previous governments, content to leave foreign affairs in the hands of the British Government, had shown little interest in the League.

There are no systematic studies of New Zealand's role in the League comparable with W.J. Hudson's Australia and the League of Nations (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980) and R. Veatch's Canada and the League of Nations (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975). Two post-war M.A. theses were written before the relevant government department files were available in the archives. Thus H.S. Koplowitz-Kent's 'New Zealand's Relations With the League of Nations 1919-1939' (University of New Zealand, 1945) and E.F. Jenkin's 'New Zealand and the League of Nations 1919 to 1939' (University of New Zealand, 1950) were severely limited in their sources.

There are scattered references to the League in general works on New Zealand's external affairs, such as F.L.W. Wood's The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs (Wellington: Department of

Internal Affairs, 1958) and T.C. Larkin's New Zealand's External Relations(Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962), and in political biographies like W.D. Stewart's The Right Honourable Sir Francis H.D. Bell PC, GCMG, KC: His Life and Times(Wellington: Butterworth, 1937) and Keith Sinclair's Walter Nash(Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1976).

This is not to say that some further insights into New Zealand's relations with the League are non-existent. Two detailed studies by Mary Boyd - 'A Footnote on New Zealand's Attitude to Dominion Status 1919-21'(Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies. 3.1, Mar 1965) and 'The Record in Western Samoa to 1945'(In A. Ross(ed). New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1969) - revealed the important role played by the League in New Zealand's administration of Western Samoa. I.C. McGibbon's Blue-water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-1942(Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1981) discussed the League in the context of the development of New Zealand's defence policy in the interwar period, as did W.D. McIntyre in a chapter on 'Labour and Collective Security' in New Zealand Prepares for War: Defence Policy 1919-39 (Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, 1988). Kathryn Peters' 'New Zealand's Attitudes to the Reform of the League of Nations: The Background to the Memorandum to the Secretary-General, 16 July 1936'(New Zealand Journal of History. 6.1, Apr 1972) is a valuable study of the development of one aspect of Labour's League policy.

In recent years some research essays and theses, using the richer

archival sources now available, have focussed on New Zealand's involvement with the League. B.M. Attwood's 'Apostles of Peace: The New Zealand League of Nations Union'(M.Phil. Research Essay, University of Auckland, 1979) examined the impact of League supporters in New Zealand. Two other theses using these sources have been almost exclusively devoted to the crises which confronted New Zealand at the League during the late 1930s. S.M. Skudder's ''Bringing It Home': New Zealand Responses to the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939'(PhD Thesis, University of Waikato, 1986) is a very detailed study of New Zealand's position on the civil war which includes an extremely thorough analysis of press opinion and the role of trade unions and other groups. B.S. Bennett's Canterbury M.A. thesis (1988) has been published as New Zealand's Moral Foreign Policy 1935-1939: The Promotion of Collective Security Through the League of Nations(Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1988) and places the New Zealand stand in the context of 'alternative' foreign policies elsewhere, notably in Britain.

Yet what has emerged is an unbalanced and disjointed picture of New Zealand's relationship with the League. The period from 1936 to 1939 has attracted most attention, while the previous sixteen years have been all but ignored. The object of this study is to correct the imbalance and put Labour's actions at Geneva into the context of New Zealand's entire multi-faceted twenty-year association with the League. Far from ignoring the League, New Zealand governments from 1920 on found it necessary to maintain a close interest in its activities. It was, indeed, Massey's Reform Government, not Savage's Labour Government, which took the first hesitant steps through the League towards establishing an

independent international identity for New Zealand.

I have received considerable assistance over the past four years in researching and writing this thesis. I am particularly grateful to Professor W. David McIntyre for his patient supervision and helpful advice. I wish to thank the staffs of the National Archives, the Alexander Turnbull Library, the General Assembly Library, the University of Canterbury Library and the University of Auckland Library for their tolerance and the unhindered access they provided to their collections. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of Bruce Bennett and Tom Larkin. Finally, in recognition of their constant support, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Gerrit and Eefje Chaudron.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE 1919 PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

The League of Nations was the product of the worldwide revulsion of war engendered by the slaughter and destruction of the First World War. From 1915, private individuals and organisations in Britain and the United States studied the problem of establishing some effective machinery to prevent a repetition of the holocaust. In 1916, United States' President Woodrow Wilson gave his backing to the concept of a world organisation. In Britain, Lord Robert Cecil, the Minister of Blockade, pressed the government to enquire into "various schemes for establishing by means of a League of Nations, or other device, some alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes." The Entente Powers accepted the League concept in January 1917. A year later, Wilson issued his famous Fourteen Points, which constituted the war aims of the United States. The last of these points called for a general association of nations to be formed under specific covenants for the mutual guarantee of the political independence and territorial integrity of all states. In Britain, the Phillimore Committee was established in February 1918, comprising top Foreign Office officials, historians and a judge, to prepare recommendations on a scheme for an international body. A similar committee was also set up in France.

By the time the armistice was signed in November 1918, each country had formulated its proposals. The French wanted a League to Enforce

Peace, a body which could implement effective sanctions against an aggressor through an international force. The British proposed only minimal interference with the traditional rights of sovereign states in the form of a slight extension of the prewar conference system and practice of arbitration. Member-states of the proposed international organisation would not renounce the right of war entirely but that right would be legally defined. Sanctions would be imposed against a member which resorted to illegal war. The American plan was much vaguer, focussing primarily on a system of mutual guarantees and general disarmament. Should arbitration fail in a dispute, economic sanctions would be instituted but military force was to be excluded. It also proposed a more elaborate permanent structure than either the British or French envisaged. These varied proposals formed the basis of the discussions on the League at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.<sup>1</sup>

The New Zealand Government was aware of these developments because Prime Minister William Fergusson Massey and his coalition partner, Sir Joseph Ward, had been in London for lengthy periods during the previous two years as members of the Imperial War Cabinet. There was no indication, however, that either Massey or Ward was especially interested in the League idea. Speaking in England in July 1918, Massey said he did not want to discourage the idea of a League, particularly if it would prevent war, but the experience of the past four years led him to put his faith in military preparedness.<sup>2</sup> In his view, a strong British Empire was a greater guarantor of peace than any League of Nations. Indeed, Massey's already strong imperialism grew during the war into an almost mystical belief in the Empire, the survival of which he was con-



vinced was also essential to New Zealand's existence.

Massey's patriotism derived in large part from the Protestant loyalism of his native Ulster. Born in Limavady in 1856, Bill Massey came from a family of tenant farmers who emigrated to New Zealand in 1870. He worked as a ploughman near Ashburton before buying his own small farm at Mangere. After a period of involvement in local bodies and farming organisations, he was elected to Parliament in 1894, representing Waitemata until 1896 and Franklin thereafter. Opposition Whip from 1896, Massey became Leader of the Opposition in 1903 and the first Reform Party Prime Minister in 1912. Always reluctant to delegate responsibility, he also took the Lands, Agriculture, Labour, and Industries and Commerce portfolios. In 1915 he formed a National Coalition with Ward's Liberals which lasted until 1919. The Reform Party was returned in that year and Massey remained in office until his death in 1925.

He was an imposing figure with a violent temper but he was also personally popular and respected. Lacking in imagination and limited in sympathy, Massey nevertheless possessed the strength of character and power of decision to lead the country for thirteen difficult years. Yet, it was his inflexible and narrow outlook which was responsible for New Zealand's indifferent, almost hostile, reaction to the establishment of the League of Nations.<sup>3</sup>

There was almost no reference to the League idea in Parliament. In the Legislative Council in October 1918, William Triggs warned it would be a fatal mistake for the British Empire to rely on a League of Nations

rather than its own defence forces to preserve its security.<sup>4</sup> A few days later, the leader of the Labour Party, Harry Holland, stated that a League established while capitalism remained would never be a true commonwealth of nations.<sup>5</sup> Only Labour MP James McCombs expressed any hope that the peace conference would transform Wilson's League ideal into reality.<sup>6</sup> As Massey and Ward prepared to leave New Zealand in December 1918 for the conference, their main ambition was to obtain a share of the reparations which Germany and its allies would be forced to pay, and to secure control of the German Pacific islands of Samoa and Nauru.<sup>7</sup>

New Zealand had occupied German Samoa soon after the outbreak of the war to prevent German naval raiders in the Pacific from utilizing its radio station and Apia harbour. The government declared that Germany should never be allowed to return to the South Pacific and that it was in the Dominion's strategic interests, and in the best interests of the Samoan people, for Western Samoa, as it became known, to become a New Zealand colony.<sup>8</sup> While in London during the war, Massey and Ward pressed the British Government to recognise New Zealand's claim to Western Samoa and its interest in Nauru.<sup>9</sup> Massey's colonial ambitions in regard to the former had much to do with considerations of national prestige but the claim to the latter was based purely on economic considerations. Nauru was an important source of super-phosphate, vital to the Dominion's expanding agricultural sector. As early as 1915, Massey enquired whether New Zealand might be given control of this resource after the war, even though Australian troops had occupied the island.<sup>10</sup>

The matter became more urgent after the British Government agreed in 1917 not to oppose Japanese claims to the German islands in the North Pacific. Massey and the Australian Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes, who was also keen to annex Nauru, secured British acceptance that none of the territories conquered by the Dominions would be returned to Germany. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George supported the claims of New Zealand, Australia and South Africa,<sup>11</sup> but he faced strong opposition from the Americans. Wilson made it plain that he would not countenance such annexations, insisting that these colonies should be put under some form of international administration. When told by Lloyd George that Britain could not guarantee that the Dominions' claims to the colonies would be accepted, Australia and South Africa joined Canada in demanding separate representation at the peace conference, so that they could present their own case on the colonial question. Hughes was especially angry that Lloyd George had not consulted the Dominions on the terms of the armistice.<sup>12</sup>

Lloyd George was prepared to let the Dominions discuss the line the British delegation would take at the peace conference but the demand for separate Dominion representation came as an unwelcome surprise.<sup>13</sup> The Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, first raised the question of Canadian representation in October 1918. Lloyd George proposed one Dominion representative on the British delegation but there was disagreement on how this representative should be selected.<sup>14</sup> South Africa's Defence Minister, Jan Christiaan Smuts, supported a panel system with each Dominion leader serving on the delegation in rotation. Hughes insisted that no one would represent Australia but himself. New

Zealand caused difficulties because Massey demanded that both he and Ward should attend, a claim Lloyd George and Borden dismissed as absurd.<sup>15</sup> At the preliminary Allied conference in December 1918, it was agreed that each Great Power would send five delegates to the peace conference, and that the Dominions and India could attend as additional members of the British delegation when questions directly affecting them were discussed. This gave the Dominions an advantage over the smaller Allied Powers, in that they would participate in the discussions as members of a Great Power delegation, not as outsiders.

Borden and Hughes were still not satisfied. At the Imperial War Cabinet meeting on 31 December 1918, they argued that not only should the British delegation represent the Empire by including a Dominion representative as the fifth member, but the Dominions should separately be accorded the same status as Belgium and the other small Allied countries. As a result, the British delegation became the British Empire Delegation and the British Government requested separate representation for the Dominions. The Americans and the French resisted the idea because they did not wish to upset the smaller powers and they did not regard the Dominions as independent states. They suspected the British request was a ploy simply to increase British representation. Lloyd George persisted and eventually agreement was reached.<sup>16</sup> Along with the other small powers, Canada, Australia, South Africa and India were each given the right to send two delegates to Paris but New Zealand was granted only one. This did not entitle them to a vote separate from the British Empire Delegation, however.<sup>17</sup> Although the awarding of an extra seat to Belgium and Serbia at the last minute badly

stung Dominion pride, all things considered, the Dominions had been remarkably successful.<sup>18</sup>

Because Massey was away from London during this period, New Zealand had little to do with the representation issue. Indeed, it was not until he and Ward reached England in the middle of January 1919, that they learned New Zealand had not received equal treatment with the other Dominions. Both would have preferred a single British Empire Delegation but now that the Dominions were to have separate representation they were angered by New Zealand's inferior status. They believed the Dominion had been discriminated against simply because its representatives could not arrive soon enough to defend New Zealand's interests.<sup>19</sup> Though they took the matter up with Lloyd George, the allocation remained the same.<sup>20</sup> Ward still accompanied Massey to Paris but as a member of the British Empire Delegation.<sup>21</sup>

The Paris Peace Conference opened on 18 January 1919. Thirty-two states were represented but most played only a minor role. Massey later conceded that while New Zealand's reduced representation had been a "slap in the face which was unexpected and undeserved", it turned out to be of little consequence because the Plenary Conference had been a farce.<sup>22</sup> Even their membership of the British Empire Delegation did nothing to guarantee the Dominions a more substantial role in the proceedings, much to the annoyance of their Prime Ministers.<sup>23</sup> Important decisions were made in the Council of Ten, a continuation of the wartime Supreme Allied Council, comprising the leaders and foreign ministers of the five Great Powers.<sup>24</sup>

As members of the British Empire Delegation, the Dominion representatives were appointed to the principal commissions established to consider particular aspects of the draft peace treaty. Massey became an alternate British representative on the Responsibility of the Authors of the War and the Enforcement of Penalties Commission, which studied the question of war guilt and investigated war crimes. He served as President of the Criminal Acts Sub-commission.<sup>25</sup> Determined that vindictiveness should not govern the Commission's work, he told Lloyd George that he was less interested in determining who was guilty, than ensuring that "justice should be administered without fear or favour."<sup>26</sup>

Sir Ernest Pollock, the British Solicitor-General and Massey's colleague on the Commission, later commended him for producing "the succinct, yet sufficient and accurate table of crimes that forms part of our completed report."<sup>27</sup> But while Massey was satisfied with the report, he was doubtful whether it would be acted upon.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the work of the Commission can be regarded as so much wasted effort. Its members worked without any lead from the Great Powers or any indication how its recommendations would be implemented. The final report was formally put before the conference but by that time the opportunity of apprehending the wanted Germans had passed.<sup>29</sup>

On the insistence of the American delegation, the task of drafting the Covenant of the League of Nations was given priority over all other business at the conference. Massey believed this arrangement was responsible for the slow progress of the conference, describing the methods adopted as "most unbusinesslike".<sup>30</sup> He told Minister of Lands David

H. Guthrie: "Personally, I think it would have been better had the Conference begun with the discussion of the actual peace terms rather than take up so much time with such matters as the League of Nations."<sup>31</sup> The New Zealanders were anxious to recover some of the £100 million which the war had cost the Dominion. But the Reparations Commission was, according to Massey, a "fiasco". He was not sure if New Zealand would even get the £20 million he had asked for, believing British interests were being subordinated to Wilson's influence.<sup>32</sup> Massey plainly had little regard for the American President and he was not going to let Wilson deprive the Dominion of the German colonies it wanted.

The Council of Ten began discussing the future of the German colonies on 24 January 1919. Wilson would have preferred to address the situation in Europe first and leave the colonies to the League of Nations, but the British thought the latter problem could easily be disposed of first.<sup>33</sup> In any case, they wanted what was a contentious issue for the Dominions out of the way.<sup>34</sup> Frankly contemptuous of the Dominions for trying to thwart his plans for the colonies, Wilson was at first reluctant to allow them to present their own cases to the Council but he relented under pressure from Lloyd George and French Premier Georges Clemenceau.<sup>35</sup> Hughes spoke first on New Guinea, then Smuts on South-West Africa, and then it was Massey's turn.

He began by tracing the recent history of Western Samoa, noting how Germany's presence there threatened New Zealand's security. Massey declared that unless the territory was granted to the Dominion, it would remain a threat. He claimed that while Maoris, Cook Islanders and

Fijians had volunteered to fight for the British Empire, this had not occurred in the German colonies. He asserted further that he had received letters from Western Samoa pleading that New Zealand not allow the Germans to return. He did not believe any form of joint control of the territories by the Dominions and the League of Nations would succeed and that, in view of New Zealand's great sacrifice during the war, it should be allowed to annex Western Samoa.<sup>36</sup>

There followed a week of acrimonious discussion which at times threatened to disrupt the conference. Wilson was unconvinced by the Dominions' arguments, declaring the strategic argument, in particular, to be irrelevant because the League would prevent the situation they feared. He reiterated his opposition to annexation, arguing that a League mandate was in the territories' best interests. Hughes and Massey were outraged that Wilson thought the Dominions unfit to govern the colonies. Addressing the Council of Ten on 28 January 1919, Massey pointed to the similarity between the Maori and the Samoans. He declared that even under a mandate system, New Zealand's treatment of its Polynesian people could not have been any better.<sup>37</sup> Comparing a mandate to a leasehold, he said: "No individual would put the same energy into a leasehold as into a freehold. It would be the same with governments." Massey asked Wilson whether the United States would have welcomed the placing of the uncolonised American territories to the west under mandate following the War of Independence. Stung into defence, Wilson dismissed Massey's argument by stating there was no historical precedent for the work now in hand.<sup>38</sup>



The dispute came to a head on 30 January 1919. Angered by the refusal of Massey and Hughes to give up their demands for annexation, Wilson accused them of issuing an ultimatum to the conference. Massey denied the accusation hurridly and eventually he and Hughes were persuaded by the other British Empire delegates to accept a compromise proposal. Three classes of mandate were proposed, of which the third, or 'C' class, would accomodate the claims of the Dominions.<sup>39</sup> Under the draft terms, it was envisaged that a 'C' mandate would incur minimal interference from the League, thus amounting to annexation in all but name.<sup>40</sup> The proposal was put before the conference's Mandates Commission, but Japan's insistence that the mandatories should not be able to place restrictions on immigration to, and residency in, the 'C' mandates, proved an insurmountable obstacle. The problem of defining the terms of the 'C' mandates was deferred until the establishment of the League Council in January 1920.<sup>41</sup>

Wilson may have been satisfied that the trustee principle had been generally accepted and the League would supervise the mandated territories, but he could not get around the fact that the draft had virtually conceded the colonies to the Dominions.<sup>42</sup> Massey certainly thought the arrangement satisfactory.<sup>43</sup> The British proposal for the distribution of the mandates was not formally accepted by the leaders of the Great Powers, the so-called Council of Four, until early May 1919 but there was little doubt that Western Samoa would be allocated to New Zealand. But a question mark still hung over Nauru. The solution proposed by Massey and the British Colonial Secretary, Lord Milner, was a mandate held by the British Empire, in which the administration of the island

would be shared by Australia, New Zealand and Britain. This unique arrangement was accepted by the Council of Four on 7 May 1919.<sup>44</sup> Considering that New Zealand's claim to Nauru was the weakest, it was a significant achievement for Massey.

While Massey was protecting New Zealand's political and economic interests, the League of Nations Commission had been drafting the Covenant. Apart from some concern about how Article 8 on disarmament might affect the British Empire,<sup>45</sup> the Commission's work engendered little interest among the New Zealand delegates. On his arrival in England in January 1919, Massey admitted he had not given much thought to the idea of separate representation for the Dominions at the League but he declared that if the other Dominions demanded such representation, New Zealand would do the same.<sup>46</sup> This statement typifies the New Zealand attitude to the League. Massey was content to follow the lead of the other Dominions.<sup>47</sup>

As the senior and most independently-minded Dominion, Canada was to the forefront in pushing for separate Dominion membership. The first draft of the Covenant, prepared by Lord Robert Cecil in January 1919, had excluded the Dominions from the League. They were regarded as less than independent states by the other powers and the British were reluctant to abandon the principle of the unity of the Empire.<sup>48</sup> Under pressure from the Canadians and South Africans, Cecil included a clause recognising the Dominions' right to membership. The British proposals were combined with those of David Hunter Miller, the American delegation's legal adviser, forming the basis of the discussions of the League of

Nations Commission in February 1919. Despite Wilson's reservations about their status, the right of the Dominions to separate and equal membership of the League was accepted by the Commission.<sup>49</sup>

On 7 February 1919, the Japanese delegate proposed an amendment to the draft Covenant which profoundly affected the British Empire. Baron Makino wanted a clause guaranteeing racial equality inserted in Wilson's Article 21 on religious freedom. It would bind all League members to accord to alien nationals within their territories "equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction either in law or fact on account of their race or nationality."<sup>50</sup> The clause was an expression of the Japanese desire to be treated as equals by the Western Powers. It was also motivated by deep resentment of the discrimination Japanese migrants had suffered in the United States, Canada and Australia, and the policy of excluding Asian immigration by these countries. Hughes and Massey would not agree to it unless their right to administer immigration policy as they chose was guaranteed. When the Japanese refused this rider, Hughes was convinced the clause was a direct challenge to the 'White Australia' policy and refused to accept it. Unwilling to allow the League to interfere in New Zealand's own restrictive immigration policy, Massey also rejected the clause. Because the question was so divisive, raising issues neither the Americans nor the British wished to address, Article 21 was abandoned altogether.<sup>51</sup>

At a British Empire Delegation meeting in April 1919, Borden asked whether the Dominions were entitled to be elected to the Council, or executive body, of the League. The Covenant appeared to exclude them

since the Council would be composed of "States which are Members of the League", and the Dominions were not strictly states. When the British asked the Americans to replace the word "states" in the Covenant with the words "members of the League", they refused. Miller told Cecil that not only would the small powers resent any of the four seats allocated to them being occupied by the colonies of the Great Powers but that the Great Powers themselves would be reluctant to allow the smaller powers any seats at all if "of those four at any given time New Zealand and the Philippines might be two." In the event, Wilson was not prepared to make an issue of the British request and the wording was changed. Even so, Borden obtained a written assurance from Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, on 6 May 1919, that the Dominions could become members of the Council.<sup>52</sup> A similar situation arose over whether the Dominions could be members of the International Labour Organisation, one of the League's most important subsidiary bodies, and be elected to its Governing Body. Again it was Borden who overcame American opposition to secure the recognition of Dominion rights.<sup>53</sup>

When the final text of the Covenant was laid before the conference on 28 April 1919, Massey thought it far from perfect. While supporting the League in principle, he believed the political millenium was not within reach and that it was "to the British Commonwealth of Nations we must look to maintain peace." Ward was more optimistic. He thought the League would be a great force for the pacification of the world.<sup>54</sup> In fact, he believed Germany should become a member as soon as it had disarmed. Writing to Lloyd George on 2 June 1919, Ward said the League was an insurance scheme for the future peace of the world and that if

Germany was admitted, it would reduce the danger of it falling to Bolshevism. For the same reason, he advised against making the terms of the Peace Treaty too harsh.<sup>55</sup>

The Covenant Of the League formed an integral part of the peace treaties. Under the Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June 1919, the British plenipotentiaries signed not simply for Britain but on behalf of the British Empire. Below them, inset from the margin and listed according to seniority, the Dominion Prime Ministers and the representative of India signed for their own countries. This curious formula was constitutionally ambivalent because the Dominions were already committed by the British Empire signatories.<sup>56</sup> What is more, this unique arrangement was embodied in the Covenant, which came into force with the Treaty of Versailles on 10 January 1920. Thus, for the first twelve years of the League's existence, the Dominions were listed individually as members, yet they were also strangely subordinate to the state known as the British Empire.

Massey certainly did not believe the Dominions' constitutional position had changed because of their separate signature of the peace treaty and membership of the League. He told Parliament in October 1919: "We signed it not as independent nations in the ordinary sense of the term. We signed it as the representatives of the self-governing nations within the Empire; we signed it as partners in the Empire..."<sup>57</sup> This view gave a useful weapon to Wilson's political opponents in the United States when the Peace Treaty was sent to Congress for ratification.<sup>58</sup> It was claimed that by giving the Dominions and India separate membership of the League, the British Empire had gained six

votes in the Assembly while the United States and other members would have only one vote.

In fact, this was a red herring because, as Wilson acknowledged, the unanimity rule in both the Assembly and the Council meant the one vote of the United States constituted an "absolute veto".<sup>59</sup> But Wilson's opponents noted that if the United States and a member of the British Empire became involved in a dispute, under Article 15 of the Covenant the two could not vote on the Assembly's recommendations, which only required a majority, but the other members of the Empire were still able to do so. A reservation was proposed which not only would have entitled the United States to the same number of votes as the British Empire but, in the event of a dispute, the decision of the League would only be binding on the United States if all the other Empire members abstained from voting. Concerned by the mounting opposition to the treaty in Washington, the special British envoy, Lord Grey, urged his government to accept the latter condition.<sup>60</sup>

When the British Government consulted the Dominions on the matter in November 1919,<sup>61</sup> Canada, South Africa and Australia strongly opposed any suggestion that the Dominions would not be full and independent members of the League. Canada and New Zealand were prepared to agree to the reservation on Article 15 if this would ensure ratification of the treaty by the United States.<sup>62</sup> But the demand for more American votes and the denial of Dominion eligibility for election to the Council were regarded by both as a direct challenge to their status in the League and were rejected.<sup>63</sup> It is interesting that while New Zealand

had not actively sought that status, Massey would not abandon it simply to appease the United States. Without Dominion support, the British Government felt unable to accept the American terms. The reservation concerning the Dominions was only one of fourteen attached to the treaty by the United States but, in an extraordinary chain of events, the Dominions' membership of the League contributed to the American decision in March 1920 not to join the organisation.

There was no question that New Zealand would ratify the Peace Treaty but Massey did not hide his doubts about the League. In Parliament in September 1919, he said:

The League is only in its infancy. It will take time to develop, and during that period the League of Nations will require the best brains in the world in order to make the necessary amendments and alterations which changing conditions may render necessary.

He was convinced that a League composed solely of Great Powers was the best way to guarantee peace. In his view, the admittance of the small powers was a grave mistake which would render the League ineffective.<sup>64</sup>

But, as the subsequent debate in Parliament proved, the League, and New Zealand's membership of it, excited almost no interest among New Zealanders compared to the Dominion's new responsibility for Western Samoa and the phosphate resources of Nauru.<sup>65</sup>

Harry Holland noted derisively that in Massey's statement Nauru had practically overshadowed the whole Peace Treaty.<sup>66</sup> But these were concrete matters which could be understood. The concept of the League was too radical and abstract for most New Zealanders. It is probable that the government itself had little idea what the Dominion's membership involved. Yet it was at the League that New Zealand served a kind of apprenticeship towards becoming an independent member of the international community.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Northedge, F.S. The League of Nations: Its Life and Times 1920-1946. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986, Chapter 2; Walters, F.P. A History of the League of Nations. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1952, Chapter 3
- 2 The Times, 11 Jul 1918, William F. Massey Papers 1398:7
- 3 Gardner, W.J. Massey - The Farmer Politician. In New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation. V. Auckland: Paul Hamlyn, 1971, pp.1965-1970; Burdon, R.M. The New Dominion: A Social and Political History of New Zealand 1918-39. Wellington: Reed, 1965, pp.34-35; Scholefield, G.H.(ed) Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific. 3rd ed. Wellington: Rangitira Press, 1932, p.140; Beaglehole, J.C. New Zealand: A Short History. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936, pp.33-34; Sinclair, K. A History of New Zealand. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, p.240
- 4 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates(hereafter cited as NZPD), 31 Oct 1918, Vol.183, pp.122-123
- 5 Ibid, 5 Nov 1918, p.194
- 6 Ibid, 9 Dec 1918, p.1031
- 7 Massey was also determined that the Anzac graves on Gallipoli should be put under Allied control. Massey to Lloyd George, 5 Feb 1919, David Lloyd George Papers 1903-1944 Micro 404:2; Massey to Sir J. Allen(Acting PMNZ), 26 Apr 1919, Hon. James Allen Papers 9
- 8 Daily Telegraph, 26 Oct 1916, Massey Papers 1398:9; British-Australasian, 1 Feb 1917, Massey Papers 1398:11; Observer, 9 Jun 1918, Massey Papers 1398:16; Massey to Lord Liverpool(GGNZ), 26 Dec 1917, Walter Long Papers 1913-1923 Micro 616:2
- 9 Louis, W.R. Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919. London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.37ff; GGNZ to SSCols, 10 Jan 1918, Allen Papers 4:M1/570; Imperial War Cabinet 1918, 31st meeting, 14 Aug 1918, EA11:5
- 10 Macdonald, B. Massey's Imperialism and the Politics of Phosphate. Massey Memorial Lecture 1982. Massey University Occasional Publication No.7, pp.3ff; Massey to Lord Milner(SSCols), 15 May 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:2
- 11 Louis, p.121; Spartalis, P. The Diplomatic Battles of Billy Hughes. Sydney: Hale & Tremonger, 1983, p.52



- 12 Fitzhardinge, L.F. The Little Digger 1914-1952: William Morris Hughes A Political Biography. II. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1979, pp.354-361
- 13 Wigley, P.G. Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British-Canadian Relations 1917-1926. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp.68-69
- 14 Sir Maurice Hankey, the British Cabinet Secretary, said: "...the Dominions are as jealous of each other as cats." Roskill, S. Hankey: Man of Secrets. II. London: Collins, 1972, pp.28-31
- 15 Borden, H.(ed) Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs. II. London: Macmillan, 1938, p.868
- 16 Fitzhardinge, pp.362-369; Wigley, pp.74-79
- 17 Supreme War Council, 12,13 Jan 1919, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States(hereafter cited as FRUS). III. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1943, pp.482-507,531-538; Tillman, S.P. Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, pp.77-79; Spartalis, pp.117-119
- 18 Wigley, p.79
- 19 Morning Post, 23 Jan 1919; British-Australasian, 23 Jan 1919, EA31:1
- 20 See Acting Sec.War Cab. to Hankey(Sec.BED), 15 Jan 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:2; Press, 29 Jan 1919, quoted in Burdon, p.25
- 21 The New Zealand delegation also included Frank D. Thomson(Massey's Pvte.Sec), Miss A.M. Saunders(Ward's Pvte.Sec) and R. Riley(Technical Expert on Political and Diplomatic Questions).
- 22 Massey to Allen, 13 Feb, 26 Apr 1919, Allen Papers 9
- 23 Wigley, pp.79-82
- 24 Fitzhardinge, pp.370-371
- 25 FRUS, III, pp.63ff; Wigley, pp.83-85; Temperley, H.W.V.(ed) A History of the Peace Conference of Paris. VI. London: Henry Frowde & Hodder & Stoughton, 1924, pp.345-346. Ward may have served on one of the Financial Committees. Massey to Lloyd George, 24 Jan 1919, PM9:8; Ian M? to Walter Long(1st Lord Admiralty), 5 Mar 1919, Long Papers 616:6
- 26 Massey to Lloyd George, 24 Apr 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:2
- 27 Pollock to Massey, 30 Mar 1919, Massey Papers 1398:1
- 28 Massey to Allen, 26 Apr 1919, Allen Papers 9

- 29 Marston, F.S. The Peace Conference of 1919. London: Oxford University Press, 1944, pp.86-87
- 30 Massey to Allen, 13 Feb 1919, Allen Papers 9; The Times, 22 Mar 1919, EA31:3
- 31 Massey to Guthrie, 3 Mar 1919, PM9:49
- 32 Massey to Allen, 26 Apr 1919, Allen Papers 9; Massey to Lloyd George, 23 Jun 1919. Nevertheless, when the British made it clear that the only way the Allies could obtain higher reparations was to occupy Germany, Massey agreed any settlement was preferable to that. BED 19A, 11 Apr 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:2
- 33 Council of 10, 23 Jan 1919, FRUS. III, pp.693-703
- 34 Fitzhardinge, pp.387-388
- 35 Lloyd George, D. The Truth About the Peace Treaties. London: Victor Gollancz, 1938, pp.515-516
- 36 Council of 10, 24 Jan 1919, FRUS. III, pp.716-728; Borden, p.906
- 37 The Canadians believed this argument was more cogent and relevant than anything Massey had yet advanced with regard to Western Samoa. General Memo on Canadian Delegates' Activities, 28 Jan 1919, Documents on Canadian External Relations(hereafter cited as DCER). II. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1969, pp.193-196
- 38 Council of 10, 27,28 Jan 1919, FRUS. III, pp.738-757
- 39 Council of 10, 30 Jan 1919, FRUS. III, p.785-817; Fitzhardinge, pp.394-397; Miller, D.H. The Drafting of the Covenant. I. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928, p.114
- 40 For the background to the proposal see Louis, pp.134-136; Spartalis, pp.128-136; Fitzhardinge, pp.390-393; Roskill, II, pp.53-54
- 41 Fitzhardinge, p.398
- 42 Spartalis, pp.140-145
- 43 Massey to Guthrie, 3 Mar 1919, PM9:49; British-Australasian, 29 May 1919, EA31:5. See G.J. Garland(Leg. Councillor) to Massey, 18 Apr 1919, PM9:8
- 44 Massey to Milner, 9 Apr 1919; Massey to Lloyd George, 5 May 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:2; Spartalis, pp.148-150; Fitzhardinge, pp.399-400; Macdonald, pp.9-11; Williams, M. & Macdonald, B. The Phosphateers. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985, pp.127-130
- 45 BED 27, 21 Apr 1919, DCER. II, pp.123-127

- 46 Morning Post, 23 Jan 1919, EA31:1
- 47 Snelling, R.C. Peacemaking, 1919: Australia, New Zealand and the British Empire Delegation at Versailles. Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. 4.1, Oct 1975, p.19
- 48 Temperley. VI, p.347
- 49 Miller. I, pp.38-61; II, pp.61-154. See DCER. II, pp.21ff; also Bendiner, E. A Time for Angels. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975, pp.97-98
- 50 Miller. II, p.324
- 51 Spartalis, Chapter 8; Fitzhardinge, pp.400-410; Miller. I, pp. 183-184, 268-269; II, p.325; General Memo on Canadian Delegates' Activities, 24 Mar 1919, DCER. II, pp.214-215; Lord R. Cecil to Lloyd George, 15 Apr 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:1
- 52 Miller. I, pp.478-489
- 53 See FRUS. III, pp.257-282; Borden, pp.947ff; Glazebrook, G.P. Canada at the Paris Peace Conference. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942, pp.77-81
- 54 British-Australasian, 29 May 1919, EA31:5
- 55 Ward to Lloyd George, 2 Jun 1919, Lloyd George Papers 404:2
- 56 Wigley, pp.86-89
- 57 NZPD, 17 Oct 1919, Vol.185, p.519
- 58 Scott, G. The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations. London: Hutchinson, 1973, Chapter 2
- 59 Tillman, p.299
- 60 SSCols to GGNZ, 12 Jan 1920, encs., EA2:114/1/1(1); Egerton, G.W. Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978, pp.182-190; Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939(hereafter cited as DBFP). 1st Series. V. Woodward, E.L. & Butler, R.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954, Chapter 2
- 61 SSCols to GGNZ, 8 Nov 1919, G44:1
- 62 GGNZ to SSCols, 21 Nov 1919, G44:1
- 63 Ibid; SSCols to GGNZ, 9 Jan 1920, G44:1; SSCols to GGNZ, 11 Feb 1920, G2:51; SSCols to GGNZ, 21 Feb 1920, G2:52; SSCols to GGNZ, 13 Mar 1920, G44:1; GGNZ to SSCols, 23 Mar 1920, G5:21

64 NZPD, 2 Sep 1919, Vol.184, pp.39-40

65 Ibid, pp.32-77; 9 Oct 1919, Vol.185, pp.195-207; 17 Oct 1919, pp.503-540

66 NZPD, 2 Sep 1919, Vol.184, p.63

## CHAPTER 1

### NEW ZEALAND'S FOREIGN POLICY STRUCTURE

New Zealand did not possess an external affairs department in 1919. Three or four people handled the exchange of communications between London and Wellington, which constituted the Dominion's extremely limited foreign relations. All cables and despatches from the British Government intended for the Dominions were directed through the Colonial Office. The Secretary of State for the Colonies sent them on to the Governor-General (acting in his dual capacity as the representative of the Crown and the British Government's agent) who then passed them on to the Dominion government.<sup>1</sup> Because New Zealand Prime Ministers regarded external affairs as their personal province, the Prime Minister's Office handled foreign affairs. No doubt it was considered unnecessary to create a separate department when the amount of work was so small. Under this system, if there was a request from the British Government for the New Zealand Government's opinion on any matter, it might take days or even weeks for a reply to be sent after allowing time for decoding, encoding and ministerial consideration.

The Prime Minister's Office consisted of the Prime Minister's Private Secretary, Frank David Thomson, and a couple of clerical and secretarial staff. An independent, forthright character, who had Massey's complete confidence, Thomson joined the Education Department in 1895. He became private secretary to Prime Minister Richard Seddon in 1901,

and served as chief private secretary to Prime Ministers Bill Massey, Sir Francis Bell and Gordon Coates until 1926. Thomson was also Secretary to the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council.<sup>2</sup>

The possibility that the Dominions would, as separate members, conduct their relations directly with the League of Nations greatly concerned the British Government. In January 1920, it suggested that all communications between the Dominions and the League should be directed through the British Cabinet Secretariat to avoid the danger of expressing "divergent and even incompatible attitudes" on issues before the League.<sup>3</sup> While the other Dominions rejected the suggestion,<sup>4</sup> New Zealand welcomed it. Massey saw any change in the system of communications as a threat to the imperial relationship, and thus the Colonial Office remained the clearing house for New Zealand's communications with the League, except for correspondence with the International Labour Organisation.<sup>5</sup>

The system never worked satisfactorily for there were continual complaints from officials, ministers and the High Commissioner in London about misdirected documents.<sup>6</sup> The Minister of External Affairs, Sir Francis Bell, moved to end this confusion in February 1925 by directing that all communications with the League were in future to be direct, and that correspondence from Geneva to Wellington was to be addressed to the Prime Minister rather than the Governor-General.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of this move to streamline the system, it is unlikely League matters received the full consideration they deserved. From 1922

the Colonial Office sent a greater volume of cables and despatches in an attempt to keep the Dominion governments abreast of imperial and international affairs, but it is doubtful whether this was of any great assistance to them.<sup>8</sup> As the Governor-General, Lord Jellicoe, observed, Massey simply did not have the time to acquaint himself fully with their contents.<sup>9</sup> Even in 1923, it was apparent that the government's machinery in this area was inadequate but Massey always resisted the reforms required to improve the situation.

In Wellington, all League communications were received from Government House by the Department of Internal Affairs, which then distributed them to the appropriate departments. This procedure made co-ordination of policy difficult, if not impossible. The Department of External Affairs had been established in 1919 to administer New Zealand's mandate of Western Samoa. Sir James Allen, who became the first Minister of External Affairs, intended the new department to take charge of all of the Dominion's external relations, including League affairs.<sup>10</sup> In February 1920, he secured Attorney-General Bell's support for his plan to reform the existing system of communication with London by centralising everything within External Affairs.<sup>11</sup> While Massey apparently balked at the idea of a New Zealand Foreign Office,<sup>12</sup> he was persuaded that the correspondence with the League should be handled by one department. In September 1921, Cabinet gave approval for External Affairs to act in that capacity.<sup>13</sup> In view of the concurrent confusion over the channel of communication with the League, it is not surprising that the department failed in its co-ordinating role.<sup>14</sup> Though Bell continued to press the department's case, he was unable to impress upon Massey the serious-

ness of the situation.<sup>15</sup>

The problem remained unresolved until 1926 when Gordon Coates created the Prime Minister's Department, which took over all the functions related to foreign affairs from External Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office.<sup>16</sup> Coates had little knowledge of, or interest in, New Zealand's external affairs but as Prime Minister he recognised it was important to be kept informed on the subject, and that the existing system was inadequate.<sup>17</sup> Thomson was appointed Permanent Head of the department on 1 April 1926 and Carl August Berendsen was recruited by Thomson to head the department's Imperial Affairs Section.

Appointed Imperial Affairs Officer on 21 June 1926, Berendsen was a hardworking and extremely able man. He was born in Sydney in 1890 to a family in reduced circumstances. The family moved to New Zealand around the turn of the century. Joining the Education Department in 1906, Berendsen gained a LLM studying part-time at Victoria University. After serving with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force which occupied German Samoa in 1914, he returned to the civil service and transferred to the Labour Department in 1917. Called up again, he was in the army in England when the armistice came. Rejoining the Labour Department on his return to New Zealand, Berendsen rose to the second rank before his appointment to the Prime Minister's Department. Forceful, dogmatic and voluble in character, and a prima donna by nature, he was admirably suited to his new position which required him, though only an adviser, to formulate New Zealand's foreign policy. On Thomson's death in 1935, Berendsen became Permanent Head.<sup>18</sup>





Carl Berendsen

Endowed with a staff of three and a back room in Parliament Buildings, the Imperial Affairs Section was faced with a formidable task. It was to deal with all the Prime Minister's correspondence relating to treaties, general questions of defence policy, the League of Nations, and the secret despatches, cables and Committee of Imperial Defence papers received from the British Government. For the first time someone in the government was reading and analysing the papers sent by Britain and the League, instead of simply filing them away. The section was

also to act as a clearing house for correspondence with the Governor-General and the High Commissioner in London.<sup>19</sup>

The expansion of the Prime Minister's Office to include an Imperial Affairs Section was an acknowledgement that New Zealand's foreign affairs were of sufficient importance to merit greater government attention but it also indicated Coates' determination to retain prime ministerial control over their direction. In 1928 he consolidated his control by taking over the External Affairs portfolio and appointing Berendsen as Secretary of External Affairs, a position he held concurrently with that of Imperial Affairs Officer.<sup>20</sup> Ironically, it was Berendsen's very capability, coupled with his reluctance to delegate responsibility, which ensured New Zealand would not establish a professional foreign affairs department until 1943.<sup>21</sup>

The reforms of Coates' administration improved the efficiency and depth of New Zealand's governmental foreign policy machinery but they were also limited. This is evidenced by the meagre resources allocated to the Prime Minister's Department and the ad hoc nature of the department's links with External Affairs. There was no overall plan to expand the Dominion's international position or even to participate more actively in the determination of the Empire's foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> The principle of economy remained the foremost concern of the New Zealand Government, both in cost and effort.

As a member of the League of Nations, New Zealand was expected to send a delegation to the annual Assembly at Geneva. Because the Domin-

ion was a League mandatory, it was also required to present an annual report to the Permanent Mandates Commission. In common with other countries distant from Geneva, such representation was a problem. It was expensive to send a delegation from New Zealand and impracticable for Cabinet ministers and government officials to be absent from the country for several months each year to attend a forum the government was frankly indifferent to. Thus, the choice of the High Commissioner in London as New Zealand's representative was made on the basis that his proximity to Geneva reduced the expense of the Dominion's representation.

The very expediency of the appointment was to be a constant source of frustration to the High Commissioners. They were expected to represent the Dominion at an important international organisation but were given insufficient resources to do so adequately. Indeed, during the 1920s and early 1930s, the High Commissioners were usually poorly informed by Wellington and kept on a tight budget. Sir James Allen, High Commissioner from 1920 until 1926, found his salary insufficient to cover the expenses of his position and he had to supplement his income from his private means.<sup>23</sup> The government took a rather narrow view of the High Commissioner's role. In 1926 Coates said that what New Zealand wanted for a High Commissioner was a man who would be serviceable in trade and marketing, and make a reasonable showing on the social side.<sup>24</sup> The High Commissioners were keen, however, for the government to utilize them as the official channel of communication between Wellington and London.<sup>25</sup> But successive Prime Ministers preferred to communicate directly with the British Government. As a result, the High

Commissioners' involvement in the Dominion's foreign affairs was limited.<sup>26</sup>

It says much for the government's regard for the High Commissioner's Office that in 1921 Allen had personally to request the League Secretary-General to send him copies of the League documents sent to New Zealand because he would not otherwise have seen them. He complained to Bell that he was not even given copies of the government's replies to the League communications.<sup>27</sup> The situation was patently ridiculous. In 1922 Allen was faced with the task of representing New Zealand at the League on the mandate question without even seeing a copy of the government's annual report on Western Samoa.<sup>28</sup>

Despite his initial support for directing New Zealand's communications through the British Cabinet Secretariat, the difficulties which resulted led Allen to extract a promise from Massey, in 1921, to use his office as the channel between Wellington and Geneva.<sup>29</sup> The new system never worked satisfactorily and was abandoned in May 1922.<sup>30</sup> Although communications with the League now passed through the Governor-General and the Colonial Office, Massey gave instructions that the High Commissioner was to receive a copy of all correspondence; an arrangement Allen was prepared to accept.<sup>31</sup>

The great distance from Geneva meant that League documents sometimes did not reach New Zealand in time for the government to consider them fully before the Assembly opened. In November 1929, Berendsen complained to J.V. Wilson, a New Zealander working in the Secretary-Gene-

ral's Office, that it sometimes took four months for documents to arrive, with the replies requested within a month of the date of receipt.<sup>32</sup>

Because of the difficulties with communications, the New Zealand delegate was forced, on more than one occasion, to abstain from voting as he had not received any instructions from Wellington.<sup>33</sup> It was a problem which was never wholly overcome.<sup>34</sup> The High Commissioners found their isolation from New Zealand a real handicap at Geneva. Before 1930, the government rarely briefed the High Commissioner on matters which were on the Assembly's agenda. Sir Thomas Wilford, High Commissioner from 1930 to 1933, complained to Minister of Finance William Downie Stewart, who visited London in September 1932, that he had little idea of New Zealand opinion on many of the questions he voted upon.<sup>35</sup> Wilford was grateful for the free hand which the government accorded him at Geneva but he would have welcomed more direction from Wellington.<sup>36</sup>

The High Commissioners' difficulties with the government over their role as First Delegate to the League were not confined to ensuring they were kept properly informed. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, they were critical of the government's refusal to recognise the inadequacy of New Zealand's delegation to the Assembly. New Zealand was entitled to send three delegates to Geneva but it was more usual for the High Commissioner alone to represent the Dominion there. At twenty-two of the twenty-nine sessions of the Assembly New Zealand attended between 1920 and 1946, the delegation consisted of the High Commissioner and a few staff from his office. The High Commissioner's English Private Secretary, Charles A. Knowles, attended all but one of the sessions of the Assembly, often acting as a delegate. In fact, Knowles was de facto

head of the New Zealand delegation to the last Assembly in 1946 in the absence of the High Commissioner. The High Commission Librarian, Cyril B. Burdekin, represented the Dominion at four Assemblies between 1923 and 1931. From 1935 until 1939, the High Commissioner's Economic Adviser, Dr Richard M. Campbell, often represented New Zealand at Geneva. The secretarial duties during the period 1920 to 1939 were shared by Misses E.M. Hannam and J.R. McKenzie. They occasionally acted as delegates also. If nothing else, New Zealand's Assembly delegations were characterised by a remarkable continuity.<sup>37</sup>

While the other Dominions included high officials and senior parliamentarians in their delegations as a matter of course, New Zealand did so only occasionally. In 1922 and 1926, Bell took advantage of his private visits to Europe to attend the Assembly. Acting as his secretary, and a member of the delegation, on these occasions were Edward O. Mousley and James S. Hunter, respectively. As Minister of External Affairs, Bell recognised the importance of maintaining good relations with the League, especially the Permanent Mandates Commission. For this reason, he found it useful to send the Secretary of External Affairs, James D. Gray, to Geneva in 1925.<sup>38</sup> Three years later, Samoan affairs were again responsible for the appointment of a second delegate when the recently-retired Administrator of Western Samoa, Sir George Richardson, went to Geneva to explain New Zealand's actions during the Mau disturbances in the islands.<sup>39</sup>

The situation improved slightly after Labour came to power in 1935. At the September 1936 Assembly, William Jordan, High Commissioner from

1936 until 1951, led a delegation which included his predecessor, Sir James Parr, Berendsen, and the Liason Officer for Foreign Affairs in London, Sir Cecil Day. The following year, the Minister of Labour, Hubert T. Armstrong, and the Minister of Finance's secretary, Dr William B. Sutch, accompanied Jordan to the May Assembly. In 1946, George R. Laking, Second Secretary in the Department of External Affairs, served on the delegation to the last Assembly.

New Zealand's election to the Council in 1936 did not, however, prompt the government to boost the Dominion's representation at Geneva. Of the eleven Council sessions New Zealand attended between 1936 and 1939, the delegation consisted of Jordan and his staff on nine occasions. The Minister of Finance, Walter Nash, joined the delegation to the January 1937 session and Armstrong attended the May 1937 session. While South Africa, Canada and the Irish Free State had permanent representatives at Geneva by this time, Jordan believed the workload was insufficient for New Zealand to follow suit.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that New Zealand's delegation to the Assembly was often comparable to those of underdeveloped states like Liberia and Persia embarrassed Allen and Parr. They believed the Dominion's prestige would inevitably suffer if it was not represented on the Assembly Committees by prominent New Zealanders.<sup>41</sup> After his visit to Geneva in 1925, Gray thought the delegation should include at least one MP, preferably a Cabinet minister.<sup>42</sup> In 1927, Parr sought unsuccessfully to have Sir Robert Heaton Rhodes, the Deputy Leader of the Legislative Council, appointed as a delegate.<sup>43</sup> The League of Nations Union also pressed Coates to

appoint two people from New Zealand, one of whom should be a woman, to the League delegation.<sup>44</sup> Commenting on the situation in 1925, Wilson told Bell: "It seems a pity that on half the [League] Committees N.Z. should have to be represented by Sir James' secretary - an admirable fellow, but he has never been in N.Z."<sup>45</sup>

A solution offered by Wilson and the High Commissioners was to enlist the services of distinguished New Zealanders resident in Britain or visiting Europe.<sup>46</sup> But as Berendsen explained to Wilson in August 1928, the government feared that people appointed from outside official circles would pursue independent initiatives which were inconsistent with its views.<sup>47</sup> The government was not always of this opinion, however. In 1922, Massey appointed a British Conservative MP, Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland,<sup>48</sup> as a member of the delegation to the Third Assembly.<sup>49</sup> The appointment of British politicians to Dominion delegations was not unprecedented because Lord Robert Cecil had been a member of the South African delegation since 1920.<sup>50</sup> Although the arrangement was apparently satisfactory, Steel-Maitland's unavailability the following year put an end to the experiment.<sup>51</sup> In 1929, however, a New Zealand educationist visiting Geneva, Miss Phoebe Myers, was asked by Parr to join the delegation to the Assembly.<sup>52</sup>

In a report to the Secretary-General after visiting New Zealand in 1934/1935, Wilson stated that the weakest point in the Dominion's relationship with the League was its defective representation at the Assembly. When he had discussed the question with the Prime Minister, Wilson was told that a lack of personnel and money, and the travelling time in-



volved, made it unlikely this situation would change. Although he urged Berendsen to attend the Assembly, Wilson believed it was unlikely he would do so because Berendsen was the only experienced person in his department. Wilson noted that the Dominion's poor record in this area meant there was no one in the Cabinet or the House of Representatives who could speak of Geneva with first-hand knowledge. Of the three High Commissioners who had represented New Zealand there, only Allen had returned home for good. Wilson was convinced this was a significant factor behind the general lack of interest in the League among New Zealanders.<sup>53</sup>

The High Commissioners took their position as head of New Zealand's League delegation very seriously for, despite the difficulties, it enhanced their status. But they were unhappy that they could be deprived of this position when a visiting Cabinet minister was appointed to the delegation. Allen told Coates in March 1926 that the High Commissioner should always be First Delegate unless the Prime Minister himself attended.<sup>54</sup> The issue came to a head later that year when Bell insisted on acting as First Delegate to the Seventh Assembly. Sir James Parr, High Commissioner from 1926 until 1929 and again from 1934 to 1936, was sufficiently annoyed to consider not accompanying Bell to Geneva, but his displeasure went no further than requesting Coates to resolve the matter when he came to London for the Imperial Conference in October 1926.<sup>55</sup> In fact, it was not until a decade later that a similar situation arose again. When two Cabinet ministers joined the delegations to the Council and the Assembly in 1937, Jordan insisted on remaining First Delegate.

Interestingly, Allen threatened not to attend the Assembly in 1924 during a dispute over the appointment of a second delegate. He had advised Wellington in July 1924 that Lord Robert Cecil wanted to become a member of the New Zealand delegation.<sup>56</sup> A change of government in South Africa and the defeat of the British Conservative Government had deprived Cecil of the opportunity of representing either country at the Assembly. That Massey even considered Cecil's appointment is extraordinary since Cecil's passionate support of the League was totally at variance with the government's indifference.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps Massey believed Cecil's prestige and experience would bolster the Dominion's image at Geneva since he told the Colonial Secretary to inform Cecil that his offer of assistance had been accepted.<sup>58</sup>

Allen was furious that Massey should have used the Colonial Office, instead of his office, to transmit the invitation, and he immediately requested the Colonial Office not to inform Cecil of Massey's answer.<sup>59</sup> In a forthright cable, Allen reminded Massey that this procedure had not been used in Steel-Maitland's case and he declared that he would not serve as New Zealand's delegate to the League if he, or any other delegate, was not appointed directly by the New Zealand Government.<sup>60</sup> Massey's purpose in using the Secretary of State as the medium of communication in this instance was probably to give the British Government the opportunity to object to the invitation if it so desired. But Allen seems to have regarded Massey's deference as a denegation of New Zealand's independent membership of the League. Indeed, it was because Allen's objection raised all kinds of questions relating to the Dominion's constitutional relationship with Britain, that Bell recom-

mended the invitation to Cecil be withdrawn.<sup>61</sup> Allen went to Geneva without assistance.

The small size of the New Zealand delegation created its own problems. Such a meagre delegation could not hope to attend all the meetings of the six Assembly Committees, even when the High Commissioner's staff substituted for him on some of them. The High Commissioners found they were in no position to seek, or hold, important posts at the League. In 1922, Allen was forced to give up his position on the League's budgetary watchdog, the Supervisory Commission, because of his heavy workload.<sup>62</sup> The New Zealand First Delegate was rarely considered for the prestigious position of Committee chairman, which carried with it the title of Vice-President of the Assembly. Parr stated in 1929 that although his seniority entitled him to a chairmanship, he was passed over because New Zealand had such a sparse attendance record and made such a poor showing in comparison to other members. He noted bitterly that the successful candidate from the Irish Free State had never attended the Assembly before and had "no superior qualification to my own except that his country sends a large and influential delegation."<sup>63</sup>

Four years later, Wilford had to decline the offer of a chairmanship because he simply did not have the staff to allow him to attend every meeting.<sup>64</sup> The problem was not confined to the Assembly Committees. During most sessions special committees were established to study various issues which were before the League. Because of New Zealand's poor reputation, Wilson stated that the League Secretariat tended to

forget the Dominion when drawing up the lists of committee members.<sup>65</sup>

The High Commissioners also found the League delegation's tight budget irksome. When Coates queried a request in 1928 for the delegation's expenses to be increased to £500 to cover the cost of an additional delegate, Parr pointed out that his delegation's expenses were but a small proportion of those incurred by the other Dominions.<sup>66</sup> Complaining about the inadequate nature of New Zealand's League representation to the new Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, in January 1929, Parr noted that the cost of the delegation had been £453/13/- the previous year. This comprised the travelling expenses and subsistence allowances of Parr, Richardson and four High Commission staff. By comparison, the Irish delegation cost £740 and the South African delegation cost £1,300.<sup>67</sup> Parr's complaint fell on deaf ears.<sup>68</sup> The position became even more acute when the economic depression caused the government to retrench. As an economy measure in 1932, the delegation of Wilford, Knowles and a secretary only arrived in Geneva the evening before the Assembly opened.<sup>69</sup> Two years later, Parr commented acidly that while the smallness of New Zealand's delegation had grave disadvantages, "it does make for economy."<sup>70</sup>

It is clear that by the late 1920s the High Commissioner's Office was straining to cope with the increasing workload. In May 1930, Wilford told the Prime Minister:

Since the Imperial Conference of 1926, this office has certainly become the New Zealand branch of the Foreign Office, and I think you will have to decide in the near future to provide some capable man to help the High Commissioner in matters dealing with foreign affairs, so that he may get some time to attend to office routine business...<sup>71</sup>

Wilford proposed that Knowles should become his foreign affairs assistant, taking charge of the flood of documentation from the League and Whitehall.<sup>72</sup> It is likely Knowles had already assumed some responsibility in this area but because the government did not act on Wilford's request, the arrangement was not formalised.

The High Commissioners found attending the Assembly an onerous task. During the Tenth Assembly, Parr wrote: "...I am hopelessly overworked in being the sole representative for my country here. I shall be fortunate if I escape a breakdown during the present Session here, so many and manifold are the engagements to which I have to give attention every week."<sup>73</sup> The activities connected with the Assembly were not the High Commissioners' only concern. They still had to deal with the ordinary High Commission business while they were in Geneva.<sup>74</sup> In addition, the High Commissioners were often required to represent the Dominion at other League and non-League conferences and meetings.

In 1929, Parr found it difficult to attend the Conference on Amending the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice because it was held in Geneva at the same time as the Assembly.<sup>75</sup> During the early months of 1930, Wilford had little time to deal with other matters because he was occupied with the London Naval Conference, meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty Conference.<sup>76</sup> He was thus unable to attend the Conference on the Codification of International Law at The Hague in March.<sup>77</sup> Similarly in 1931, Knowles warned Berendsen that because the Disarmament Conference would be held during the period from the end of March to July 1932,

which was the High Commissioner's busiest season in Britain, his office might not be able to afford the staff for Geneva.<sup>78</sup> In the event, Wilford was forced to divide his time between the Disarmament Conference, the Special Assembly, the Economic Conference at Lausanne and his duties in London.<sup>79</sup> As a result, New Zealand was unable to be represented on the Technical Commissions of the Disarmament Conference.<sup>80</sup> It was probably vexation rather than pride which prompted Wilford's remark that "in no other High Commissioner's office in London are such varied duties undertaken by so small a staff."<sup>81</sup>

The problems described above demonstrate the reluctance of New Zealand governments to accept the full implications of the Dominion's transition from autonomy to independence in respect of external relations during the 1920s and early 1930s. Although the High Commissioner's position had not altered significantly in theory, in practice he was privy to much of the information received by the government in Wellington, and as its representative at the League and other international gatherings, he had become New Zealand's Ambassador in Europe. That successive governments refused to fully recognise this change by not according the High Commission the resources it required did not alter that fact.

Yet, the position of the High Commissioner was but one example of how the apparently unchanging facade of New Zealand's governmental structure belied the Dominion's growing involvement in the direction of its own external affairs. The government's handling of these affairs changed significantly, from the undisciplined methods dictated by an ad

hoc governmental organisation, to a more efficient system co-ordinated by one department under the direction of a knowledgeable and effective official. But while New Zealand's membership of the League was, to a significant extent, responsible for these developments, the government's interest in the activities at Geneva was fitful. New Zealand saw only unwelcome obligations arising from its membership. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, its representatives' efforts were directed at keeping those obligations to a minimum by urging the League to practise the same virtues the government itself practised; economy and caution.

## REFERENCES

- 1 McIntosh, Sir A. Origins of the Department of External Affairs and the Foundation of an Independent Foreign Policy. In New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. New Zealand in World Affairs. I. Wellington: Price Milburn, 1977, pp.14-15
- 2 Templeton, M. Some Notes on the Development of the Prime Minister's Department. War Narrative. 1948. p.3; Gardner, W.J. W.F. Massey in Power. Political Science. 13.2, Sep 1961, p.19; Who's Who in New Zealand.... 3rd ed. p.330
- 3 SSCols to GGNZ, 22 Jan 1920, EA2:114/1/5(1); Scott, p.65. The British Government also proposed that the Dominions appoint representatives to London with the power to decide League policy for their governments in consultation with British ministers. The New Zealand Cabinet rejected the idea. Massey to Liverpool, 4 Mar 1920, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 4 SSCols to GGNZ, 7 Jul 1920, G2:52; Doms. 76. League of Nations, Correspondence with the Self-governing Dominions 1919 & 1920, Feb 1921, G40:10; Hudson, W.J. Australia and the League of Nations. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980, p.37; Veatch, R. Canada and the League of Nations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, p.66
- 5 GGNZ to SSCols, 26 Feb 1920, EA2:114/1/5(1); GGNZ to SSCols, 3 Feb 1920, G44:1; NZ Herald, 21 Apr 1920; Imp Conf 1921, 24th meeting, 12 Jul 1921, G40:2; NZPD, 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, p.481. Until October 1921, the ILO communicated directly with the Labour Department, and thereafter with External Affairs. F.W. Rowley(Sec.Labour) to Director, ILO, 6 Jul 1920, (Sum.L.6/36/10)EA2:112/1/1(1A); Rowley to ILO, 6 Sep 1921, L1:6/36/11(1); Rowley to ILO, 20 Oct 1921, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 6 E.P. Lee(Min.Ext.Affairs) to Massey, 19 May 1922; Sir J. Allen(High Commissioner) to Massey, 12 May 1922; Massey to W.D. Stewart(Min.Int. Affairs), 19 May 1922, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 7 Bell to Allen, 11 Feb 1925; Bell to Sir C. Fergusson(GGNZ), 18 Mar 1925. The Governor-General was satisfied to see copies only. Fergusson to Bell, 28 Mar 1925; cf. Lord Jellicoe(GGNZ) to Massey, 27 Apr 1922. See R.H. Campbell(FO) to Sec-Gen, 2 Jun 1925, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 8 See file G45:2; also Bell to Jellicoe, 6 Sep 1923, G49:52/8f
- 9 Jellicoe, Lord. 'Dominion Voice in the Councils of the Empire', Jun 1923, G40:3. See also R.G. Casey(Aust.Liasion Officer, London) to S.M. Bruce(PM, Aust.), 29 Oct 1925, 18 Feb 1926, My Dear P.M.: R.G. Casey's Letters to S.M. Bruce 1924-1929(hereafter cited as My Dear P.M.). Hudson, W.J. & North, J.(eds) Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1980, pp.96-101,138-142



- 10 NZPD, 17 Oct 1919, Vol.185, p.540; see 6 Jul 1928, Vol.217, p.208; J.D. Gray(Sec.Ext.Affairs) to Gen. G. Richardson(Admin.W.Samoa), 22 Jun 1923, IT1:79/76(2)
- 11 Bell to Allen, 13 Feb 1920, IT1:22/1
- 12 NZPD, 5 Oct 1920, Vol.188, p.221
- 13 Gray to Lee, 2 Sep 1921; Cab. minute, 10 Sep 1921, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 14 Lee to Massey, 19 May 1922, EA2:114/1/5(1); Allen to Massey, 17 Dec 1923, PM9:2. See Solicitor-General to U-Sec.Int.Affairs, 25 May 1923, appended minute by Bell, 3 Jun 1923, EA2:114/1/1(2); Gray to F.D. Thomson, 5 Jul 1923, IT1:25/1/10(1)
- 15 Bell to Massey, 9 May 1924, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 16 Gray to Thomson, 28 Jun 1926, EA2:114/1/1(3). See NZPD, 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.754-755; S.J. Smith(Acting Sec.Ext.Affairs) to Gray, 10 Oct 1925, IT1:79/86; Gray to Col. J.W. Hutchen(Sec.Samoan Admin.), 28 Jan 1926, IT1:79/76(1)
- 17 NZPD, 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, p.771. See 30 Jun 1926, Vol.209, pp.302-303; Fergusson to Coates, 1 Jan 1926, EA1:153/14/1(1); Smith to Hutchen, 21 May 1925, IT1:79/76(1)
- 18 Berendsen, C.A. Reminiscences of an Ambassador(5 vol typescript held in Ministry of External Relations and Trade); Trotter, A. Personal-ity in Foreign Policy: Sir Carl Berendsen in Washington. New Zealand Journal of History. 20.2, Nov 1986, pp.169-171
- 19 McIntosh, p.15; Templeton, pp.3-7; Coates to Fergusson, 11 Mar 1927; Coates to Ministers, 18 Mar, 11 May 1927, G48:GG/46; Berendsen to J.V. Wilson, 10 Aug 1927, EA2:114/1/5(1). Cf. other Dominions. Neatby, H.B. William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Lonely Heights 1924-1932. II. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963, p.192; Mansergh, N. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of External Policy 1931-1939. London: Oxford University Press, 1952, p.71 n.1; Edwards, P.G. Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1949. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983
- 20 Berendsen to A.C. Day(Official Sec, Govt.House), 4 May 1928, G48: S/17; McIntosh, p.15
- 21 McIntosh, p.17; Trotter, p.170. See P.B.B. Nichols(British Liason Officer in NZ) to PM, Report on External Affairs, 9 Apr 1929, J. Gordon Coates Papers 1785:26
- 22 See NZPD, 3 Dec 1927, Vol.216, p.790
- 23 NZPD, 17 Jul 1922, Vol.195, pp.229-230; 8 Jul 1925, Vol.206, p.314; 7 Aug 1925, Vol.207, pp.284-285; Gray to Smith, 5 Oct 1925, IT1:79/86. See NZPD, 28 Nov 1933, Vol.237, p.542; League of Nations. Official Journal. Special Supplement(hereafter cited as LN.OJ. SS)107. Records of

- 13th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 1 Oct 1932, pp.28-29. Cf. position of Canadian High Commissioner. Bissell, C. The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, Chapters 2 & 3
- 24 Coates to Leo Amery(SSDA), 22 May 1926, quoted in Burdon, p.187
- 25 Allen to Massey, 17 Dec 1923, PM9:2; Allen to Massey, 21 Nov 1924; Allen to Coates, 1 Feb, 28 Jun, 27 Jul 1926, EA1:151/1/13(1A); Allen to Coates, 23 Mar 1926, EA1:153/14/2(1)
- 26 NZPD, 1 Jul 1925, Vol.206, p.137; see Holland, R.F. Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance 1918-1939. London: Macmillan, 1981, p.70
- 27 Allen to Bell, 15 Jun 1921, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 28 Allen to Gray, 30 Mar 1922, IT1:79/73
- 29 BED, 39th meeting, 8 Nov 1920, DCER. III. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1970, pp.417-426; Allen to Bell, 15 Jun 1921, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 30 Massey to Jellicoe, 15 May 1922, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 31 Massey to Stewart, 19 May 1922; Allen to PMO, 7 Jun 1922; Allen to Massey, 9 Dec 1924, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 32 Berendsen to Wilson, 26 Nov 1929, EA2:114/1/5(1)
- 33 LNOJ. SS87. 11th Assembly. 3rd Cmte, 2nd meeting, 18 Sep 1930, p.24; see P.H.N. Freath(Editor, Press) to G. Forbes(PM), 25 Sep 1935, EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 34 See Allen to Sec-Gen, 18 May 1926, EA1:153/14/2(1); Forbes to Wilford, 1 Jul 1931, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 35 NZPD, 7 Aug 1934, Vol.239, p.10
- 36 NZ Delegate's Report on 11th Assembly, 31 Oct 1930, p.57, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 37 Cf. Canadian delegations. Veatch, Chapter 2
- 38 Bell to Richardson, 29 Jan 1925, IT1:67/12/57
- 39 See Chapter 11 below, pp.396-398
- 40 Jordan to M.J. Savage(PM), 21 Oct 1936, PM16:1. The Irish Free State had a permanent representative at Geneva from 1923, Canada from 1925, and South Africa followed in 1929. Harkness, D.W. The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-31. London: Macmillan, 1969, p.57; Order-in-Council, 17 Dec 1924, DCER. III. pp.46-48

- 41 Parr to Ward, 11 Jan, 3 Sep 1929; Manawatu Times, 11 Jun 1931, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 42 Gray to Smith, 15 Sep 1925, IT1:79/86
- 43 Parr to OSC, 24 Jun 1927; Coates to Parr, 3 Sep 1927, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 44 Record of meeting between LNU deputation & PM, 3 Sep 1925, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 45 Wilson to Bell, 8 Feb 1925, IT1:67/12/57. See Otago Daily Times, 15 Nov 1930, EA2:114/4/5(1)
- 46 Wilson to Berendsen, 9 Jul 1928, EA2:114/6/1(1); Parr to Ward, 11 Jan, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 47 Berendsen to Wilson, 30 Aug 1928, EA2:114/6/1(1)
- 48 Steel-Maitland, Sir Arthur H.D.R.(1876-1935). Member of Lord Milner's Round Table. Active in LNU. Parl.U-Sec. for Cols. 1915-1917; Joint Parl.U-Sec. for FO 1917-1919; Min. Labour 1924-1929
- 49 Steel-Maitland to Allen, 8 Nov 1921; Allen to Massey, 27 Apr 1922, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 50 Cecil, Viscount. A Great Experiment. London: Jonathan Cape, 1941, pp.109,134; Moore, W.H. The Dominions of the British Commonwealth in the League of Nations. International Affairs. 10.3, May 1931, p.380
- 51 Massey to Allen, 5 Jul 1923; Allen to PMO, 10 Jul 1923, IT1:25/1/10(1)
- 52 NZ Delegate's Report on 10th Assembly, 1 Oct 1929, p.4, EA2:114/3/2/(3); see Who's Who in New Zealand.... 3rd ed. p.268
- 53 Report by J.V. Wilson to J. Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, pp.2-3, enc. in Wilson to Berendsen, 26 Jun 1935, EA2:114/8/3(1)
- 54 Allen to Coates, 23 Mar 1926, EA1:153/14/2(1)
- 55 Allen to Gray, 8 Jul 1926, IT1:79/73; Parr to PMO, 20 Aug 1926, EA1:153/14/1(1)
- 56 Allen to PMO, 22 Jul 1924, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 57 In 1920, Massey told Parliament that Cecil held extreme views on the League. NZPD, 23 Sep 1920, Vol.187, p.1204
- 58 GGNZ to SSCols, 24 Jul 1924, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 59 Allen to PMO, 25 Jul 1924, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 60 Allen to PMO, 29 Jul 1924, EA2:114/2/2(1)

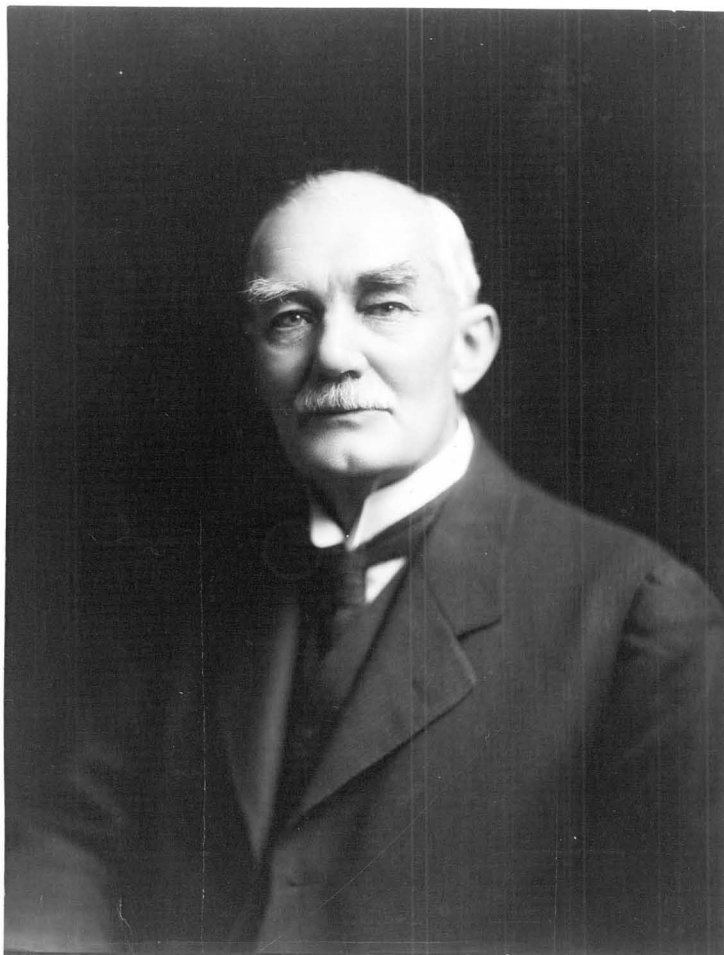
- 61 Massey to Allen, 28 Jul 1924; Minute by Bell, nd; Massey to Allen, 4 Aug 1924; GGNZ to SSCols, 6 Aug 1924, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 62 Report by Allen on High Commissioner's Office, 28 Jul 1926, EA1:62/201/37(1)
- 63 Parr to Ward, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 64 NZ Delegate's Report on 14th Assembly, 6 Nov 1933, p.3, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 65 Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, p.3, EA2:114/8/3(1). Cf. Canada. W.A. Riddell(Canadian Advisory Officer, Geneva) to O.D. Skelton(Canadian U-SSExt.Affairs), 25 Jan 1926, DCER. IV. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1971, pp.595-596
- 66 Parr to PMD, 13,15 Sep 1928; Coates to Parr, 14 Sep 1928, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 67 Parr to Ward, 11 Jan 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 68 Ward to Parr, 23 Apr 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 69 Knowles to Berendsen, 23 Sep 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 70 NZ Delegate's Report on 15th Assembly, 1 Oct 1934, p.4, EA2:114/3/2(6)
- 71 Wilford to Ward, 8 May 1930, EA1:153/15/1(1)
- 72 Wilford to Ward, 14 May 1930, EA1:153/15/1(1)
- 73 Parr to Ward, 11 Jan, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 74 Report on 15th Assembly, p.4, EA2:114/3/2(6)
- 75 Ward to Parr, 2 Sep 1929, Parr to PMD, 4 Sep 1929, EA1:106/2/4(1); GGNZ to SSDA, 3 Sep 1929, EA1:153/15/1(1)
- 76 Wilford to Ward, 8 May 1930, EA1:153/15/1(1); Report by Wilford on High Commissioner's Office, 12 May 1931, EA1:62/201/37(1)
- 77 Wilford to PMD, 18 Feb 1930, EA2:106/5/1(1)
- 78 Knowles to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1931, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 79 Wilford to PMD, 27 Jun 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 80 Wilford to Forbes, 14 Jun 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 81 Report by Wilford on High Commissioner's Office, 12 May 1931, EA1:62/201/37(1)

## CHAPTER 2

## SIR JAMES ALLEN AT THE LEAGUE, 1920-1926

When the New Zealand delegation arrived in Geneva in November 1920, the League of Nations was still a novel concept. The First Assembly opened in makeshift premises amidst uncertainty and doubt. The attitude of the Great Powers towards the Assembly was unpromising and the size of the New Zealand delegation, one of the smallest of the forty-one delegations present, reflected the Dominion's own doubts about the usefulness of the League. While most of the delegates wore the customary black, the New Zealand representatives preferred light grey lounge suits to emphasize their democratic outlook.<sup>1</sup>

The delegation was led by the Dominion's High Commissioner in London, Sir James Allen. Before this appointment, Allen had been Massey's deputy. Born in South Australia in 1855, he and his family came to New Zealand in 1856. He was educated in England and first entered Parliament in 1887, representing Dunedin East until 1890. Returning to the House two years later, Allen held the Bruce seat until his resignation in 1920. He was the ablest financial critic on the Opposition benches and fought Sir Joseph Ward on equal terms. He joined Massey's Cabinet in 1912 as Minister of Defence, Finance and Education. As Defence Minister in the National Government formed in 1915, and acting Prime Minister during the absences of Massey and Ward, Allen was largely responsible for the success of New Zealand's war effort, although he was



Sir James Allen

not always popular as a result.

On the Reform Party's return to power in 1919, he retained the Defence portfolio, regained Finance and assumed the new portfolio of External Affairs. But, because of the strain of his wartime work, Allen only agreed to stand in 1919 on the understanding he would retire almost at once to become High Commissioner. Stern and reserved in manner, he was a man of high integrity who was unwilling to compromise his

principles. The latter trait sometimes led him to refuse to withdraw from untenable positions, which embarrassed his parliamentary colleagues. Allen's persistency, even obstinacy, often revealed itself in the Assembly Committees.<sup>2</sup>

Under the Covenant there were three principal organs of the League: the Council, Assembly and Secretariat. The Council met for the first time on 16 January 1920. It comprised four permanent members and four members elected for three-year terms. The permanent seats were held by the Great Powers; the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan. They were joined by Germany in 1926 and the Soviet Union in 1934. The number of permanent seats fluctuated over the life of the League. Japan and Germany resigned in 1933, Italy resigned four years later and the Soviet Union was expelled in 1939. The non-permanent members were elected by the Assembly. Their number grew from four in 1920 to eleven in 1936. As the executive of the League, the Council acted on behalf of the whole body between Assemblies, meeting four times a year. It dealt with the numerous questions arising from the postwar treaties, all international disputes submitted to the League for settlement, and it was to the Council that the various technical agencies of the League reported.<sup>3</sup>

The Assembly was the last of the League's important organs to come into existence. From 1921, it met annually in September for a period of three to four weeks, although special sessions were sometimes called in times of crisis or to settle an important question. The Assembly was composed of delegations from all the member-states. Each delegation was

entitled to one vote and three representatives. The Assembly exercised a general supervision over all the work of the League. It approved the budget and was able to scrutinise any aspect of the Council's activities. While it shared many of the same powers as the Council, the Assembly, by its heterogeneous nature, was not a place for critical decisions or vigorous action. It was an international forum in which the principles and problems of world affairs were discussed.<sup>4</sup>

The Secretariat began its work in London in 1919. It acted as the civil service of the League, drawing its officials from many countries. It served both the Council and the Assembly by preparing documents for their sessions, organising the sessions, and supervising the execution of the decisions which were made. The importance of the Secretariat derived from the fact that it operated on a permanent basis. It served as the link between the other League organs, those organs and the member-states, and between the members themselves.<sup>5</sup> Several New Zealanders worked for the Secretariat over the years. J.V. Wilson served in the Secretary-General's Office for much of the League's life. John H. Chapman joined the Financial and Economic Organisation in the early 1920s and John B. Condliffe also served in this section from 1931 until 1937.<sup>6</sup>

Before he left London, the government probably instructed Allen to do no more than observe the Assembly proceedings, protect the Dominion's interests where necessary, and support the British delegation. The New Zealand Government was no less concerned than the British Government to prevent embarrassing disputes at the League between the delegates from



the British Empire countries. New Zealand had not sought a separate international identity and Massey preferred the continuation of the system of a British Empire Delegation.<sup>7</sup> At the 1921 Imperial Conference, Massey voiced his opposition to separate representation, fearing it might result in the members of the Empire voting on opposite sides. He hoped any future revision of the Covenant would replace such representation with a single Empire delegation. Not surprisingly, this suggestion received no support from the other Dominion leaders and it was not raised again.<sup>8</sup>

Massey regarded Dominion representation at Geneva as an exception which he did not wish to see repeated at other international meetings.<sup>9</sup> The government's view on the subject was expounded by Sir John Salmond, who was New Zealand's representative on the British Empire Delegation to the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921/1922. In his report he stated:

The position of the Dominions at Washington was essentially different from the position which they occupy at an assembly of the League of Nations. By the special and peculiar organisation of that body, self-governing colonies are admitted as members in their own right as if they were independent States. Although by constitutional and international law such colonies are merely constituent portions of the Empire to which they belong, they are entitled by express agreement to be treated, so far as practicable, as if they were independent. But no such principle was recognised at Washington, or exists except for the special purposes of the League of Nations.<sup>10</sup>

This statement was greeted with dismay in Canada and South Africa but it accurately reflected opinion in New Zealand.<sup>11</sup>

Because of the government's concern about the possibility of public disagreement over issues brought before the League, New Zealand readily

agreed to a British suggestion that the Empire delegations should meet before, and during, the Assembly to discuss the agenda.<sup>12</sup> Allen reported that although they all agreed it was essential to stand together on important issues, the Dominions were left a free hand to pursue their own interests. Allen exaggerated the value of these meetings, as often they did no more than reveal the differences between the Empire delegates.<sup>13</sup>

These differences stemmed from a basic disagreement about the role of the Dominions in the League. The British acknowledged that the Dominions had the right to voice their opinions on many of the League's activities, but on issues which affected the Empire's security it was hoped they would unite behind the British delegation. Only New Zealand fully supported this view. Canada and South Africa were determined to establish their own identities at the League. The Canadians, especially, were anxious to dispel the widely-held belief that the Dominions were mere shadows of Britain.<sup>14</sup> The Empire delegations thought it wise, therefore, not to reveal that they were meeting privately during the Assembly. In the event, the Dominions soon demonstrated that they were prepared to oppose each other and Britain in the debates and committees.<sup>15</sup>

The Empire delegations continued to meet during subsequent Assemblies but less frequently than Allen hoped.<sup>16</sup> According to Richard G. Casey, the Australian Liason Officer in London, one obstacle in the way of active liason was that the delegates were spread over four hotels. Another was the atmosphere of formality between the Empire delegations.

While Casey blamed the British delegation most for "playing gentlemen", he also believed the Dominion delegates were reluctant to make the first move towards more cordial reciprocity because they did not want to display their comparative ignorance on the subjects before the Assembly. He felt the Dominions would have to have closer contact with the Foreign Office so that League questions were not merely a dose to be administered each September before the Assembly met.<sup>17</sup>

This concern was not shared by the New Zealand Government. The Dominion had no ambition to involve itself as an independent member in most of the League's work. If the government preferred to have the British Government act on its behalf in all other aspects of the Dominion's external relations, it would have been inconsistent to treat the League differently. The British delegate on the Council was regarded as representing the Dominions also.<sup>18</sup> New Zealand believed the security of the Empire was too important to be left in the hands of inexperienced Dominion delegates in a strange, and potentially divisive, environment. On this issue, the government preferred to act through the British Government to influence proceedings at Geneva rather than utilising its own delegation.

The New Zealand delegation's task was simplified by the exclusion of security issues from its purview but there was still a large part of the League's work which was not related directly to its peacekeeping role. Confident that the Dominion's interests were being safeguarded by the British, the Massey Government took little interest in its delegation's activities at the Assembly. The decision on the subjects the

delegation should involve itself with was left to Allen. Because it was difficult to supervise the delegation from Wellington, he was given considerable latitude by the government. But the small size of the delegation was itself a restricting factor.

The first week of the session was occupied by the general debate. Its purpose was to discuss the Council's report on its work during the previous year but it was also an opportunity for delegates to speak on any subject they chose. On the conclusion of the general debate, the Assembly Committees began their work. The six Committees were as follows: First(Constitutional and Legal Questions); Second(Technical Organisations); Third(Reduction of Armaments); Fourth(Budget and Financial Questions); Fifth(General and Humanitarian Questions); and Sixth(Political Questions). Their meetings were arranged so that a national delegation of three representatives could attend them all.<sup>19</sup> As New Zealand's only delegate, Allen could not hope to do so. He was forced to decide which were within his area of expertise and of interest to the government. Allen chose to attend the Second and Fourth Committees. He attended the others as necessary or appointed a member of his staff to substitute for him.<sup>20</sup>

Allen's choice reflected not only his own background in administration and finance, but also the views of the government which was concerned that the League should not cost its members too much. The Fourth Committee was thus the obvious choice because it supervised the finances of the League. While the other committees decided which areas the League should become involved in, the Fourth Committee would, in large

measure, determine whether or to what extent these activities would be pursued by controlling funding.<sup>21</sup> By his membership of this committee, Allen could hope to influence the direction and shape of the League during its formative period.

It would be unfair to describe Allen's preoccupation with economy as merely consistent with the New Zealand Government's parsimony regarding the League. He was aware that one of the principal threats to the League was not the possibility of failure in its peacekeeping role but the suspicion of member-governments that their contributions were being utilised inefficiently.<sup>22</sup> He reminded his colleagues on the Fourth Committee that they had to defend the League's expenses to their governments, which were often willing to believe the persistent charges of extravagance and waste.<sup>23</sup> Massey had, on a number of occasions, expressed his own misgivings about the amount New Zealand was required to pay.<sup>24</sup>

A concern of many governments was the system which allocated the expenses of the League among its members. The drafters of the Covenant had provided that the cost should be borne in the same proportions as those used by the Universal Postal Union.<sup>25</sup> Because the budget of the League was much larger, this system proved to be unfair. Australia paid the same amount as France, for example. At the First Assembly, Allen requested that the Fourth Committee consider the question urgently.<sup>26</sup> A scheme was approved by the Second Assembly which required New Zealand to pay approximately £12,700, or 1.02% of the annual budget.<sup>27</sup> But the new scheme could not become operative until all the members of the Council had ratified it.<sup>28</sup> That three members had still not done so two years

later exasperated Allen, and he took them to task at the 1923 Assembly. He declared that it was intolerable that the wishes of the great majority of the members of the Assembly could be defied in this manner.<sup>29</sup> Allen firmly believed in the primacy of the Assembly in League affairs and it was a theme he referred to often in his speeches.<sup>30</sup> The new system, which had been operating on a de facto basis for three years, was finally ratified in 1924.<sup>31</sup>

Allen was greatly concerned by the problem of members persistently defaulting on their contributions.<sup>32</sup> To ensure that it received adequate funds, the League was forced to inflate the budget to compensate for unpaid contributions, which in turn increased every member's contribution. To encourage the defaulters to pay, Allen proposed making the list of non-paying members public and depriving them of the right to vote in the Assembly.<sup>33</sup> His colleagues balked at such harsh measures. The subsequent improvement in the world economic climate was reflected in the League's financial situation, and by 1924 there was a budgetary surplus. Predictably, Allen insisted this should not be used to expand the League's functions but go instead towards reducing the contributions of its members.<sup>34</sup>

The most far-reaching of Allen's efforts at financial reform began at the First Assembly. On the Fourth Committee's behalf, he drew up a report on the staff and organisation of the Secretariat, in which he deprecated the unrestrained expansion which had taken place during 1920 and recommended an independent investigation of the Secretariat's efficiency.<sup>35</sup> Allen was particularly unhappy that the Secretary-General

claimed to be responsible to the Council only, and thus considered it unnecessary to submit detailed accounts to the Assembly. A Committee of Experts was appointed which recommended that a small body of independent advisers should scrutinise the draft budget prepared by the Secretary-General before it was submitted to the Assembly.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the Supervisory Commission was established in 1921 and Allen was appointed as one of its five members.<sup>37</sup>

The Commission quickly became very important because the Fourth Committee almost always followed its recommendations.<sup>38</sup> As Vice-Chairman of the Commission and a senior member of the Fourth Committee, Allen's influence was considerable.<sup>39</sup> He had an important role in the preparation of the Financial Regulations which governed every aspect of the League's financial affairs,<sup>40</sup> and were designed to reinforce the Assembly's control over them.<sup>41</sup> It was undoubtedly a great disappointment to Allen when his heavy workload forced him to give up his post on the Commission after only one year of his three-year term.<sup>42</sup>

Allen's 1920 report on the Secretariat closely examined the conditions of the League's employees. Because the Assembly was provided with so little information on the staff structure of the League, he insisted that the Secretary-General include a detailed list of officials in the annual budget.<sup>43</sup> Allen also questioned the method of fixing staff salaries.<sup>44</sup> He conceded the majority of League officials were not overpaid but he was critical of the salaries and entertainment allowances paid to top officials.<sup>45</sup> Citing the fact that the Secretary-General received an income which was five times that of the New Zealand Prime Minister,

Allen tried on several occasions to limit the entertainment allowances but only with limited success.<sup>46</sup> The British and European delegates were unwilling to make any reductions because their nationals constituted the majority of the League's employees.<sup>47</sup> The Staff Provident Fund established in 1924 owed much to Allen's persistent lobbying but the proper Pensions Fund he advocated was not set up until 1930.<sup>48</sup>

The British and Dominion delegates were outspoken advocates of economy. Their principal targets were the proposals to extend the League's humanitarian and technical services. Allen considered that the Fourth Committee had a vital role to weed out those proposals of the other committees which were too costly, impracticable, or just incompatible with his vision of what the League was established to achieve.<sup>49</sup> Inevitably, not all the delegates agreed with Allen. While he was prepared to concede to the majority view in most cases, Allen was angered by the tactics of some delegates who used the Assembly debate to reinstate funds for projects which the Fourth Committee had recommended be curtailed or rejected.<sup>50</sup>

There were occasions when he criticised his colleagues on the Fourth Committee for relying on the Supervisory Commission to make the difficult decisions on the budget.<sup>51</sup> Allen also deplored the tendency of the Assembly to avoid divisive or complicated subjects by delegating them to a committee or holding them over until the next session.<sup>52</sup> He was also irritated by the inane procedural debates and the penchant of many delegates for long speeches. "Much of the speech-making at the League gives an air of unreality to what goes on there," he reported



in 1922.<sup>53</sup> Allen's impatience with the diplomatic niceties was shared by the other Dominion representatives, who gained a reputation for plain-speaking at Geneva.<sup>54</sup> But his frustration did not lessen Allen's determination to present his views as strongly as possible. It was not unusual to find the only dissenting voice in the Fourth Committee was that of New Zealand.

Allen campaigned vigorously against the multiplication of the League's functions, although he seldom questioned the usefulness of the humanitarian and technical agencies themselves. With the League's role as a peacemaker still uncertain, he suggested that the technical work alone was justification for the continuation of the organisation.<sup>55</sup> But Allen did object to the increasing proportion of the budget devoted to work which seemed unworthy of the League's attention.<sup>56</sup> He was also wary of proposals which assumed a role for the League he considered belonged properly to the governments of the members. His concern was not simply that the League might interfere in their domestic affairs but that some governments might abdicate their responsibilities in areas such as health to a League agency.<sup>57</sup> He doubted also whether the extension of the League's scope was constitutional under the Covenant.<sup>58</sup> Allen's vision of the League's purpose was certainly narrower than that of many of its advocates but he sincerely believed it was ill-equipped to take all the world's problems upon itself. Warning that the League was in danger of going into debt, he tried to impress upon his committee colleagues the need to restrict the League's activities to a select few, but his was usually a minority opinion.<sup>59</sup>

The target of Allen's most persistent criticism was the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation.<sup>60</sup> The objectives of the Committee included the promotion of international co-operation between teachers, scientists and artists. Allen's continued attempts to prevent the League from allocating funds to the Committee seems to have been based on personal prejudice. He held a very low opinion of the Committee's work and he thought it a waste of the League's money.<sup>61</sup> In 1924, he told the Assembly that the discussions which had led to the security and arbitration agreement known as the Geneva Protocol had done more in a few weeks to create an atmosphere of goodwill than intellectual co-operation could achieve in fifty years.<sup>62</sup> But if Allen's attacks on the Committee were motivated by personal antipathy, his efforts to reduce the budget of the International Labour Organisation(ILO) had the full approval of his government.

The attitude of the Massey Government to the ILO was coloured by its experience of organised labour in New Zealand. Industrial unrest had been rife since the Reform Party came to power and Massey had fought successfully to curb the power of the trade unions.<sup>63</sup> Mindful that an organisation with the specific goal of improving working conditions throughout the world would only serve to inspire the now cowed unions, the government pursued a policy of minimal contact with the ILO.<sup>64</sup>

The principal manifestation of this policy was New Zealand's non-representation at the annual International Labour Conferences. First held in 1919, the conferences were attended by national delegations consisting of worker, employer and government representatives. New Zealand

had no intention of participating in the conferences but the government was prepared to allow the British delegation to act on the Dominion's behalf.<sup>65</sup> Neither the complaints from the unions and Labour MPs that this arrangement was a denial of New Zealand labour's right to be represented, nor the protests of the Director of the International Labour Office, Albert Thomas, that the Dominion was ignoring its obligations under the Treaty of Versailles, had any effect.<sup>66</sup>

The reasons given by the government for its decision were that a delegation would be very expensive and in any case New Zealand was the most progressive country in the world in regard to labour legislation.<sup>67</sup> Though unconvinced by the latter argument, the Labour Party stated that if New Zealand had indeed nothing to learn then surely it had an obligation to share its experience with the rest of the world.<sup>68</sup> Predictably, the government was uninterested in such considerations. Despite continued pressure from Labour, the Dominion was only represented at two conferences between 1919 and 1935.<sup>69</sup> New Zealand was also obliged under the Treaty of Versailles to present the recommendations of the conferences to Parliament and debate their ratification. Attorney-General Sir Francis Bell interpreted the Dominion's obligation as extending no further than tabling the resolutions in Parliament.<sup>70</sup> The ILO was informed that as the provisions of the conventions were scarcely applicable to New Zealand, it was not proposed to do any more.<sup>71</sup>

The ILO was a prime target of Allen's campaign to reduce expenditure. His first clash with Albert Thomas came in 1920. Thomas was determined to reinforce the autonomy of his organisation and he questioned

the Assembly's right to examine its finances. Allen was not intimidated by the fiery Frenchman and he proceeded to scrutinise the budget after admonishing Thomas for the inadequate nature of the information provided.<sup>72</sup> By refusing to bow to the Director's demands, Allen was determined to make the ILO accountable to the Assembly.<sup>73</sup> This determination was reaffirmed by the inclusion of the Labour Office in the terms of reference of the Committee of Enquiry into the Secretariat. Allen remained wary of any attempt by the ILO to reassert its budgetary independence,<sup>74</sup> but by 1923 the ILO budget was submitted and examined by the Fourth Committee in the same way as those of the Secretariat and other League bodies. This was a significant achievement because the ILO would possess a greater degree of autonomy than any other League agency.<sup>75</sup>

In view of Allen's emphasis on practicality, his opposition to the Council's decision in 1920 to establish a Health Committee appears surprising. Although he conceded such an organisation could be more useful to New Zealand than some of the other League agencies, he noted that the Committee's functions appeared to duplicate those of the Office international d'Hygiène publique, based in Paris.<sup>76</sup> With no likelihood of the two bodies merging because of American opposition, Allen wanted the Provisional Health Committee restricted to an information-gathering role but his was a minority viewpoint.<sup>77</sup> In 1923, the Assembly established a permanent Health Organisation, the budget of which quickly came to rival those of the other agencies. This rapid growth acutely concerned the British and Dominion delegates, who consistently voted against increases in the Organisation's budget.<sup>78</sup> Allen warned the government that there was a danger of it taking a disproportionate share of the League's

funds.<sup>79</sup> Fortunately, Allen's preoccupation with economy in this case was not supported by the majority of delegates and the Health Organisation became one of the most important and useful of the League agencies.<sup>80</sup>

Allen was unable to achieve everything he desired at the Assembly but his influence was by no means negligible. The New Zealand delegation's principal contribution to the League at this time was to help put its finances on a sound footing under the control of the Assembly. Allen accurately reflected his government's conservatism with its emphasis on the practical and the possible. With hindsight he can be faulted for failing to look beyond the costs to the benefits of the agencies he opposed, but in the first years of its existence the League's future seemed very uncertain, and the New Zealand delegation's caution was probably justified.

In view of Allen's determination to restrict the scope of the League's activities, it is ironic that a New Zealand delegate was responsible for raising the slavery issue at the Third Assembly. The call by Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, the British MP on New Zealand's delegation to Geneva in 1922, for the League to take action against slavery in Africa, led to the establishment of a committee to draft a new Slavery Convention.<sup>81</sup> As a member of the committee in 1925, James Gray contributed to the draft convention which was approved by the Assembly the following year.<sup>82</sup>

It cannot be said that idealism played a major part in New Zea-

land's activities at the League. Focussing on financial and administrative matters, Allen often did his best to block schemes he considered ill-conceived and impracticable. But he did recognise that the League must educate world public opinion if it was to have any success in promoting peaceful intercourse between nations. In 1923 he stated in his report that "the only really effective weapon which the League possesses ...is the power of public opinion."<sup>83</sup> He believed that in order to ensure an enlightened public opinion it was important for the Assembly to conduct its business as openly as possible. Thus Allen gave strong support to a resolution in 1920 which required the Assembly Committees to hold most of their meetings in public and to publish their minutes.<sup>84</sup>

Allen was aware that the League was largely dependent on its member-governments to promote its work within their countries. He hoped the New Zealand Government would use his reports in this way but he was disappointed.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, the government did not begin to table these reports in Parliament until 1924,<sup>86</sup> and gave no opportunity for discussion. In November 1924, Allen expressed his unhappiness with the situation to Gray. "That two of the Reports should have been lost," he said, "is only evidence of the carelessness and indifference with which the work done at this end is received in New Zealand."<sup>87</sup> Obviously, the government's lack of appreciation of Allen's work at Geneva rankled.

Yet, from Wellington's point of view, the New Zealand delegation's activities hardly seemed relevant to the domestic concerns of the government. Until his death in 1925, Massey never exhibited any enthusiasm

for the League. He did not share the faith of its supporters that a new era of peace and international co-operation was heralded by its foundation, and he had no intention of fostering such illusions in New Zealand.<sup>88</sup> It is, perhaps, not too much to suggest that if it had not been for the Dominion's mandate of Western Samoa, Massey might have ignored the League altogether. "Mr Massey...still thinks that the League is utterly useless and our expenditure in relation to it is wasted," wrote Bell in December 1922. "With Mr Massey I have only taken the argument that we cannot help the expenditure so long as we are a mandatory, and he has seen the force of that."<sup>89</sup>

Massey was sensitive to claims that the League was some form of superstate, with the right to determine the policies of its members.<sup>90</sup> In 1924, he dismissed charges by the Labour Party that the government's actions over state servants' wages contravened the labour clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, by stating that he had not signed the treaty to give the League Council the right to dictate domestic legislation.<sup>91</sup> He was particularly anxious to assure New Zealanders that the Dominion's membership of the League did not threaten its ties with the British Empire. He told Parliament in 1921:

Certainly we joined as an individual nation...but we joined with the object of working not only for our interests, but also of looking after the interests of the Empire whenever the occasion may require. If I thought for one moment that our joining the League of Nations meant weakening the connection between New Zealand and the other countries of the Empire and the United Kingdom, I would say at once to the Parliament of this country that the time has come for us to withdraw from the League of Nations and do our best along with the other countries of the Empire.<sup>92</sup>

Statements like that led Labour MP Frederick Bartram to observe:

The Prime Minister's attitude towards the League of Nations seems to me very much the attitude of a man who, not believing in the doc-

trines or tenets of the Church, joins that institution and attends its services simply because it is an eminently respectable thing to do, and good for business...To look after our interests; to look after our Empire, our family; to get economic pickings for our table; our country right or wrong - that seems to be the spirit animating the right honourable gentleman with regard to the League of Nations.<sup>93</sup>

Despite Labour's efforts in Parliament on its behalf, the League remained a remote and alien body which excited little interest in New Zealand.

Not surprisingly, Allen saw things differently. As a delegate to the Assembly, he came to appreciate the value of the League and support its development. Like so many of his fellow delegates, he was converted by the atmosphere of Geneva which tended to broaden their narrowly nationalistic views. Because Allen remained in Europe when many of the other delegates returned home, the government and public of New Zealand were deprived of the opportunity to learn at first-hand about Allen's role in the work of the League. The High Commissioner's report to Parliament was no substitute for this personal communication.<sup>94</sup>

Allen's isolated position is clearly illustrated by the sharp contrast between his active participation in the Assembly and his government's coolness towards the League. New Zealand's initiatives at Geneva must be considered to have been primarily the work of Allen himself. It was to his credit that Allen's interpretation of his task at Geneva was somewhat broader than that of the government. In time, his efforts were recognised by the other delegates. Apart from his appointment to the Supervisory Commission, Allen was elected a Vice-President of the Special Assembly in March 1926. In part, this honour was the natural result of his lengthy service at the League. Nevertheless, the fact that



Gray noted in 1925 that Allen exercised a certain influence at the Assembly, indicates that his personal standing at Geneva was quite high.<sup>95</sup>

Allen's achievements should not be exaggerated, however. Some perspective is provided by Richard Casey who observed in 1926 that the Dominions were regarded in Geneva as "rather voiceless ghosts" of Britain because their representatives did not entertain or make an effort to get to know the other delegates or the press.<sup>96</sup> In New Zealand's case, Allen simply did not have the resources to maintain a higher profile at Geneva. This reflected the government's doubts about the League and New Zealand's place within it. Yet, even among those Dominions which had no qualms about carving out a separate niche for themselves at Geneva, their governments' interest in the League was often on the same level as New Zealand's.<sup>97</sup>

In fact, the differences in attitude to the League between Allen and the government were of degree only. Allen was certainly less inclined to condemn the whole organisation because of its inadequacies, but he shared Massey's scepticism of the League's competence to maintain peace. Both men were adamant that the British Empire must remain the guarantor of New Zealand's security. From the government's point of view, the League's advocacy of disarmament and international arbitration interfered with the Empire's right to pursue its interests as it saw fit. New Zealand supported the objects of the League but it was not prepared to allow the Empire to surrender its power to a European-dominated organisation to achieve those objects.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Walters, pp.113-117; Scott, pp.67-69
- 2 Gardner, W.J. The Rise of W.F. Massey, 1891-1912. Political Science. 13.1, Mar 1961, pp.17-18; Gardner. W.F. Massey in Power. pp.12,14, 19; Scholefield, G.H.(ed) Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific. 4th ed. Wellington: L.T. Watkins, 1941, p.56; Stewart, W. D. The Right Honourable Sir Francis H.D. Bell PC, GCMG, KC: His Life and Times. Wellington: Butterworth, 1937, p.137; O'Connor, P.S. Some Political Preoccupations of Mr Massey, 1918-1920. Political Science. 18.2, Sep 1966, p.23; Liverpool to Walter Long(SSCols), 11 Jul 1918, Long Papers 616:2
- 3 Zimmern, A.E. The League of Nations and the Rule of Law 1918-1935. London: Macmillan, 1936, pp.447-457
- 4 Ibid, pp.457-467; Burton, M.E. The Assembly of the League of Nations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941, pp.58-59
- 5 Zimmern, pp.467-479. See Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E.F. The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972
- 6 Allen to Massey, 17 Oct 1921, EA2:114/8/3(1). For Condliffe's experiences at the League see Condliffe, J.B. Autobiography 1891-1969. Chapter 7(Copy of 3 vol. typescript held in Alexander Turnbull Library)
- 7 NZPD, 19 Oct 1921, Vol.191, p.643; 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, p.480; see Massey's preface to Mousley, E.O. An Empire View of the Empire Tangle. London: P.S. King & Son, 1921
- 8 Imp Conf 1921, 24th meeting, 12 Jul 1921, G40:2
- 9 GGNZ to SSCols, 25 Oct 1921, Lloyd George Papers 404:1; GGNZ to SSCols, 19 Jan 1922, EA1:201/4/73(1)
- 10 Conference on the Limitation of Armaments. Report of Hon. Sir John Salmond. Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives (hereafter cited as AJHR). 1922, A-5, p.15; E.O. Mousley(Salmond's Pvre.Sec) to Massey, 13 Nov 1921, PM9:4; New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. Contemporary New Zealand. Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1938, pp.174-175
- 11 Hankey to Lloyd George, 14 Nov 1921, Lloyd George Papers 404:2; Memo by Sir R. Borden, 30 Jan 1923, DCER. III, pp.514-515; Imp Conf 1923, 14th meeting, 31 Oct 1923, EA11:11. See NZPD, 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, p.504; 6 Jul 1923, Vol.200, p.764

- 12 Wigley, p.114; Dugdale, B.E.C. Arthur James Balfour. II. London: Hutchinson, 1936, p.307
- 13 NZ Delegate's Report on 1st Assembly, 4 Jan 1921, p.14; NZ Delegate's Report on 2nd Assembly, 12 Oct 1921, p.47, EA2:114/3/2(1); Roskill. II, pp.195-196
- 14 Wigley, pp.114-115
- 15 Report on 1st Assembly, p.14, EA2:114/3/2(1); also Temperley, A.C. The Whispering Gallery of Europe. London: Collins, 1939, p.110; Steel-Maitland to Massey, 7 Oct 1922, enc. in Allen to Massey, 12 Oct 1922, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 16 NZ Delegates' Report on 3rd Assembly, 12 Oct 1922, p.41, EA2:114/3/2(1); Moore, p.379
- 17 Casey to Bruce, 8 Oct 1925, 25 Mar 1926, My Dear P.M., pp.80-85, 152-157. In 1920, H.A.L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, described the Dominion delegates as "fourth-rate municipal councillors". Roskill. II, pp.195-196
- 18 The other Dominions did not accept the British claim. Wigley, pp.113-114; Veatch, pp.67-68
- 19 Burton, Chapter 5
- 20 Report on 1st Assembly, p.4, EA2:114/3/2(1). Cf. Burton, p.141
- 21 Burton, p.231
- 22 See NZ Delegate's Report on 5th Assembly, 15 Oct 1924, p.13, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 23 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 8th meeting, 4 Dec 1920, p.42; 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 4th meeting, 15 Sep 1921, pp.29-30; NZ Delegate's Report on 4th Assembly, 22 Oct 1923, p.67, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 24 NZPD, 13 Oct 1921, Vol.191, p.510; 26 Jan 1922, Vol.193, p.698; Imp Conf 1921, 20th meeting, 8 Jul 1921, G40:2
- 25 Walters, p.47
- 26 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 7th meeting, 2 Dec 1920, pp.31-35; 11th meeting, 11 Dec 1920, pp.77-78; 29th Plenary meeting, 17 Dec 1920, p.684
- 27 LN. 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 10th meeting, 22 Sep 1921, pp.81-87; 11th meeting, 23 Sep 1921, pp.88ff; Report on 2nd Assembly, p.28, EA2:114/3/2(1). The figures are based on calculations in Walters, p.129 n.1
- 28 Walters, pp.148-149; LN. 3rd Assembly. 23rd Plenary meeting, 29 Sep 1922, pp.356-357

- 29 LNOJ. SS13. 4th Assembly. 8th Plenary meeting, 14 Sep 1923, p.49; SS14. 1st Cmte, 8th meeting, 21 Sep 1923, pp.29-32
- 30 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 9th meeting, 7 Dec 1920, pp.45,47; 10th meeting, 9th Dec 1920, pp.56-57; 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 13th meeting, 26 Sep 1921, pp.102-105; 3rd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 3rd meeting, 11 Sep 1922, pp.14-15; LNOJ. SS23. 5th Assembly. 18th Plenary meeting, 23 Sep 1924, p.141; also NZPD, 8 Jul 1927, Vol.212, p.422
- 31 Walters, pp.134-135. For details of New Zealand's contributions see file EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 32 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 5th meeting, 27 Nov 1920, p.24
- 33 Ibid, 11th meeting, 11 Dec 1920, p.81; 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 2nd meeting, 10 Sep 1921, pp.12-13; LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 8 Sep 1923, pp.18-49
- 34 LNOJ. SS37. 6th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 6th meeting, 22 Sep 1925, p.41. New Zealand's contribution in 1925 was reduced by approximately £370. Sec-Gen to PMNZ, 15 Nov 1924, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 35 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, Annex 3, p.90; 28th Plenary meeting, 17 Dec 1920, pp.654ff
- 36 LN. 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, Annex 2, pp.174-221
- 37 Ibid, 6th meeting, 19 Sep 1921, pp.50-52; Burton, pp.229-233
- 38 See Walters, pp.132-133
- 39 Wilson, J.V. New Zealand's Participation in International Organisations. In Larkin, T.C.(ed) New Zealand's External Relations. Wellington: NZ Institute of Public Administration, 1962, p.62
- 40 LN. 3rd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 1st meeting, 7 Sep 1922, pp.14-15; 16th meeting, 27 Sep 1922, passim
- 41 LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 8th meeting, 18 Sep 1923, p.51; 10th meeting, 22 Sep 1923, p.61; see SS42. Special Assembly 1926. 2nd Cmte, 1st meeting, 9 Mar 1926, p.56
- 42 Report by Allen on High Commissioner's Office, 28 Jul 1926, EA1:62/201/37(1)
- 43 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 23 Nov 1920, p.19
- 44 LN. 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 13 Sep 1921, p.23; LNOJ. SS13. 4th Assembly. 17th Plenary meeting, 28 Sep 1923, pp.126-127; Report on 4th Assembly, p.64, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 45 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 8th meeting, 4 Dec 1920, p.42; Report on 4th Assembly, pp.50-53, EA2:114/3/2(1)

- 46 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 8th meeting, 4 Dec 1920, pp.38-43; 29th Plenary meeting, 17 Dec 1920, p.685; 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 4th meeting, 15 Sep 1921, pp.29-31; 5th meeting, 17 Sep 1921, p.32; LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 7th meeting, 17 Sep 1923, p.42; 11th meeting, 25 Sep 1923, p.67; Annex 15a, pp.280-282
- 47 LN. 1st Assembly. 29th Plenary meeting, 17 Dec 1920, pp.689-691; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.354
- 48 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 23 Nov 1920, p.14; 28th Plenary meeting, 17 Dec 1920, p.655; 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 5th meeting, 17 Sep 1921, p.44; 3rd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 16th meeting, 28 Sep 1922, pp.112-113; LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 14th meeting, 26 Sep 1923, p.91; Annex 15b, pp.282-285; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.311-312
- 49 LN. 1st Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 10th meeting, 8 Dec 1920, pp.158-159; 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 15th meeting, 28 Sep 1921, pp.127-128; 3rd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 4th meeting, 13 Sep 1922, pp.21-22
- 50 Report on 4th Assembly, pp.17-18, EA2:114/3/2(1); LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 4th meeting, 11 Sep 1923, p.23; SS37. 6th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 6th meeting, 22 Sep 1925, p.40
- 51 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 9th meeting, 7 Dec 1920, passim; LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 4th meeting, 11 Sep 1923, pp.25-26; 6th meeting, 15 Sep 1923, p.33
- 52 Report on 4th Assembly, pp.16-17, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 53 Report on 3rd Assembly, pp.31-32; see Steel-Maitland to Massey, 7 Oct 1922, p.1, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 54 Harkness, p.34; Manning, C.A.W. The Policies of the British Dominions in the League of Nations. London: Oxford University Press, 1932, p.141
- 55 Report on 2nd Assembly, p.50; see Report on 3rd Assembly, pp.29-32; Allen to Massey, 11 Oct 1922, EA2:114/3/2(1); LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte. 7th meeting, 17 Sep 1923, p.44; Report on 5th Assembly, p.10, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 56 Report on 2nd Assembly, pp.49-50; Report on 4th Assembly, pp.16-17, EA2:114/3/2(1); Report on 5th Assembly, pp.37-38, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 57 Report on 1st Assembly, p.14; see Report on 3rd Assembly, pp.13-14; Allen to Massey, 11 Oct 1922, EA2:114/3/2(1); LN. 3rd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 3rd meeting, 11 Sep 1922, p.15; LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 13th meeting, 26 Sep 1923, p.81; SS23. 5th Assembly. 19th Plenary meeting, 25 Sep 1924, pp.150-151; NZ Delegate's Report on 6th Assembly, 28 Oct 1925, pp.21-22, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 58 Report on 5th Assembly, p.14, EA2:114/3/2(2)

- 59 LN. 3rd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 5th meeting, 14 Sep 1922, p.22; 6th meeting, 15 Sep 1922, p.37; 4th Cmte, 13th meeting, 23 Sep 1922, pp.81-82; Report on 4th Assembly, pp.15-16, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 60 On the Committee see Walters, pp.190-193; Northedge, pp.186-189; League of Nations Secretariat. Ten Years of World Co-operation. Geneva: League Secretariat, 1930, Chapter 9
- 61 LN. 3rd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 8th meeting, 21 Sep 1922, p.43; 4th Cmte, 15th meeting, 26 Sep 1922, pp.96-98; Report on 4th Assembly, p.41, EA2:114/3/2(1); LNOJ. SS17. 4th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 8th meeting, 18 Sep 1923, p.50; SS18. 5th Cmte, 7th meeting, 15 Sep 1923, p.29; Report on 5th Assembly, pp.21-22, EA2:114/3/2(2); Dugdale. II, p.308
- 62 LNOJ. SS23. 5th Assembly. 18th Plenary meeting, 23 Sep 1924, pp.141-142; see Groom, J.(ed) Nation Building in Australia: The Life and Work of Sir Littleton Ernest Groom. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941, p.183
- 63 Burdon, pp.6-8,11; Sinclair, K. Walter Nash. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1976, pp.35-36; Oliver, W.H. & Williams, B.R. (eds) The Oxford History of New Zealand. Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp.208-214
- 64 Haslam, E.P. Social Legislation in New Zealand: A Comparison. Auckland University College Economics Reprint No.1. Auckland: Unicorn Press, 1936, pp.16-17. The structure of the ILO paralleled that of the League, comprising a Governing Body, Conference and Labour Office. Northedge, pp.177-181
- 65 GGNZ to SSCols, 8 Sep 1919, (Sum.L.6/36/20); Massey to ILO, 19 Sep 1921, (Sum.L.6/36/22)EA2:112/1/1(1A); GGNZ to SSCols, 10 Mar 1920, G5:21
- 66 ILO to Rowley, 13 Nov 1920, (Sum.L.6/36/22); G. Anderson(Min.Labour) to Allen, 11 Jan 1922, EA2:112/1/1(1A); NZPD, 20 Aug 1923, Vol.202, p.261; 28 Aug 1923, pp.693-694
- 67 See NZPD, 11 Nov 1920, Vol.189, p.964; 24 Nov 1921, Vol.191, p.588; Bell to ILO, 15 Jun 1921, (Sum.L.6/36/17); Anderson to ILO, 17 Nov 1921, EA2:112/1/1(1A); cf. Canada. Dawson, R.M. William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography 1874-1923. I. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958, pp.426-427
- 68 J.V. Wilson to Bell, 8 Feb 1925, IT1:67/12/57; NZPD, 1 Jul 1925, Vol. 206, p.118
- 69 New Zealand sent delegations in 1930 and 1935. See Allen to Massey, 8 Mar 1922, L1:6/36/11(1); NZPD, 4 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.88-89; 24 Jun 1926, Vol.209, pp.139-140; Condliffe, J.B. New Zealand in the Making: A Survey of Economic and Social Development. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930, p.470

- 70 Rowley to Anderson, 9 Jun 1920, (Sum.L.6/36/21)EA2:112/1/1(1A). See eg. League of Nations. International Labour Conference. Tabular Analysis of Draft Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference under Article 405 of the Treaty of Versailles at its Third and Fourth Sessions, 1921 and 1922. AJHR. 1923, A-5
- 71 Rowley to ILO, 6 May 1921, (Sum.L.6/36/22); Massey to Sec-Gen, 4 Aug 1921, (Sum.L.6/36/21); ILO to Rowley, 12 Aug 1921, (Sum.L.6/36/22) EA2:112/1/1(1A). See Record of meeting between LNU deputation and PM, 3 Sep 1925, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 72 LN. 1st Assembly. 4th Cmte, 6th meeting, 30 Nov 1920, p.29
- 73 Ibid, 9th meeting, 7 Dec 1920, pp.45,47; 10th meeting, 9 Dec 1920, pp.60-61
- 74 LN. 2nd Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 13 Sep 1921, pp.23-24; 7th meeting, 20 Sep 1921, pp.58-61; 15th meeting, 28 Sep 1921, p.135
- 75 Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.23 n.4; Walters, pp.194-196
- 76 Report on 1st Assembly, p.7, EA2:114/3/2(1); LN. 2nd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 4th meeting, 16 Sep 1921, pp.220ff; 4th Cmte, 14th meeting, 27 Sep 1921, pp.122-123
- 77 LN. 3rd Assembly. 2nd Cmte, 3rd meeting, 11 Sep 1922, pp.14-18; 4th Cmte, 14th meeting, 25 Sep 1922, pp.88-89
- 78 LNOJ. SS27. 5th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 7th meeting, pp.53-54; SS37. 6th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 4th meeting, 17 Sep 1925, p.31; 6th Yr. No.7. Jul 1925. 34th Council, 2nd meeting, 8 Jun 1925, pp.855-856; Walters, p.134
- 79 Report on 5th Assembly, pp.13-14; Report on 6th Assembly, pp.16-17, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 80 On the Health Organisation see Walters, pp.180-182; Northedge, p.182; Ten Years of World Co-operation, Chapter 7
- 81 LN. 3rd Assembly. 5th Plenary meeting, 6 Sep 1922, pp.48-50; 13th Plenary meeting, 21 Sep 1922, p.170; Steel-Maitland to Massey, 7 Oct 1922, p.7, EA2:114/3/2(1); Wilson, J.V., pp.62-63
- 82 LNOJ. SS29. 5th Assembly. 6th Cmte, 1st meeting, 2 Sep 1924, p.7; SS39. 6th Assembly. 6th Cmte, 7th meeting, 24 Sep 1925, pp.30-32
- 83 Report on 4th Assembly, pp.20-21, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 84 LN. 1st Assembly. 3rd Plenary meeting, 16 Nov 1920, p.79
- 85 Allen to Massey, 16 Jun 1922, EA2:114/2/2(1)

- 86 The Second, Third and Fourth Reports were tabled together in 1924 and the First was tabled the following year. AJHR. 1924, A-5; AJHR. 1925, A-5A. See Gray to Lee, 8 Sep 1922, appended minute Lee to Stewart, 20 Dec 1922, EA2:114/2/2(1). The reports were edited before publication.
- 87 Allen to Gray, 5 Nov 1924; Gray to Allen, 15 Jan 1925, IT:79/73
- 88 NZPD, 23 Sep 1920, Vol.187, p.1205; 16 Mar 1921, Vol.190, p.169; 13 Oct 1921, Vol.191, pp.509-510; 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, p.484; Imp Conf 1921, 6th meeting, 24 Jun 1921, G40:2; Imp Conf 1923, 6th meeting, 11 Oct 1923, EA11:11
- 89 Stewart, pp.221-222
- 90 Imp Conf 1921, 20th meeting, 8 Jul 1921, G40:2; see NZPD, 27 Sep 1921, Vol.191, pp.35-36
- 91 NZPD, 27 Jun 1924, Vol.203, p.59
- 92 NZPD, 16 Mar 1921, Vol.190, p.169
- 93 NZPD, 6 Jul 1923, Vol.200, p.766
- 94 Gray to Smith, 15 Sep, 5 Oct 1925, IT1:79/86; Gray to Wilson, 15 Apr 1926, EA2:114/1/10(1)
- 95 Gray to Smith, 15 Sep 1925, IT1:79/86
- 96 Casey to Bruce, 25 Mar 1926, My Dear P.M., pp.152-157
- 97 Veatch, pp.13,16; Hudson, W.J., pp.4-6



## CHAPTER 3

## SECURITY, ARBITRATION AND DISARMAMENT,

1920-1925

The determination to prevent another war of the scale of the Great War was as strong in New Zealand in 1919, as in any other country touched by the conflict. The problem which confronted world governments was how to translate this determination into something tangible. For some the establishment of the League of Nations offered the best hope that a universally-acceptable formula could be found. The New Zealand Government, however, was unconvinced that the League could offer the Dominion anything comparable to the security which the British Empire already provided.

The dissension and mistrust which had surrounded the Paris Peace Conference only confirmed Massey's view that the League would not be the panacea which many hoped. He told Parliament in September 1919:

We must not allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of security. We must not jump to the conclusion that when we have established a League of Nations we have secured the peace of the world. We have not. We have only commenced.

Massey's ideas on how peace might be maintained bore little resemblance to Woodrow Wilson's utopian vision.

If it were only possible for Britain, France, and America to combine, and to say to other nations, 'We will not have war again', that would be the best guarantee of peace. I know that means keeping up armies and navies....but, as far as I am able to judge, force cannot be done without. If the League of Nations is going to be a success it must have force behind it.<sup>1</sup>

Massey wanted the League to be a continuation of the wartime alliance, a 'League to Enforce Peace'.

The Peace Conference had already proved that such a league was out of the question. Internationalism fell victim to the exigencies of national politics. The embryonic League of Nations suffered a significant setback when the United States' Senate voted against ratifying the Covenant. The American default merely reinforced the New Zealand Government's reservations about the League. Massey said he could not see how it could be a success, and the Minister of Defence, Sir James Allen, declared that the League was hardly worth the paper it was written upon.<sup>2</sup>

Despite his doubts, Massey was prepared to give it a chance to prove itself. Nevertheless, he and others believed that a league of British nations would be more effective as a peacekeeper than the League of Nations could ever be.<sup>3</sup> Few conservatives actively opposed the League in the House or the Legislative Council.<sup>4</sup> There was an acceptance of the organisation, at least in principle, by the majority of conservative opinion interested in international affairs, either because its apparent tenuousness did not threaten the Empire, or because the League might form an adjunct to the Empire in its efforts to preserve peace.<sup>5</sup> This acceptance was not, however, translated into actual support.

During 1920, the League struggled to cope with the numerous and complex problems the war had created but it seemed unable to exert much influence over international events. In September 1920, Massey told

Parliament that New Zealand could not afford to rely on the League for its security. He said: "...we should not be doing our duty if we neglected our own defence either at the present time or in the years to come."<sup>6</sup> Because New Zealand's defence was so intimately tied to that of the British Empire, Massey's statement had far-reaching implications. He was suggesting that until the League was in a position to intervene effectively in international affairs, the Empire was free to pursue its own defence arrangements.

There were some people in New Zealand who were critical of the government's policies. At the forefront of this opposition was the leadership of the Labour Party. The Parliamentary Labour Party was regarded as a significant threat by Massey and other conservatives because of its outspoken criticism of the capitalist system, and its socialist ideas. Because Labour leaders like Harry Holland, H.T. Armstrong, Peter Fraser, W.E. Parry and M.J. Savage had backgrounds in the radical trade unions, the party was labelled Bolshevist and extreme.<sup>7</sup> As leader of the Parliamentary Party, Holland was, without doubt, Massey's most formidable opponent. Caustic in debate and unwilling to court public popularity by compromising his principles, he represented the radical face of the Labour Party.<sup>8</sup> While other leaders, such as Fraser, had moderated their views by the early 1930s, Holland's image remained that of a dour doctrinaire and this did much to hinder acceptance of the Party by the majority of New Zealanders.<sup>9</sup>

Labour's policies on the economy and social welfare were shaped very much by the realities of the New Zealand situation. But, conscious

of its place and role in the international socialist and labour movement, the Party's leaders advocated views on foreign and imperial affairs which owed much to overseas socialist sources, including the British and European Labour Parties. The New Zealand Party's outlook was, therefore, less parochial than that of the conservative parties. These influences helped endow the Labour leaders with a distaste for the apparently unquestioning loyalty to the Empire displayed by the government, and a healthy scepticism of the motives of non-Labour governments in Britain.<sup>10</sup>

Labour's efforts to stir the public and the government out of their apathy with regard to external affairs were largely centred on the League by 1925. Yet, only six years earlier the Party's annual conference was as dubious about the League as Massey himself. A manifesto written by Holland and Fraser, approved by the 1919 conference, had condemned the Treaty of Versailles. It called for a true League of Peoples instead of the proposed League of Nations, which was considered to be a mere continuation of the wartime alliance of capitalist states. The exclusion of Germany and the other ex-enemy states from the League only confirmed this opinion. Equally damning was the forced disarmament of Germany while the other Great Powers were under no obligation to reduce their armed forces similarly. Labour feared that future conscripted workers would again have to die for reasons unknown to them, or that these conscript armies would be used to suppress socialism at home or abroad. The Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War was a case in point. Labour pacifists, led by Walter Nash and Fred Cooke, were especially vigorous in their efforts, at the conferences of 1919 and 1920, to include a call for the abolition of the armed forces in the Party plat-

form.<sup>11</sup>

The platform finally adopted in 1923 called for the abolition of conscription and the restrictive wartime legislation, and the unity of all workers in a League of Peoples which would distribute the world's resources equitably.<sup>12</sup> Though Labour did not explicitly support the League of Nations in its platform for over a decade, the passionate idealism of the 1919 conference was by 1921 being moderated by the realities of international politics. While Holland and Fraser continued to support the platform as an ideal,<sup>13</sup> the Parliamentary Party came to regard the League, imperfect as it was, as the only means available of pursuing Labour's internationalist goals.<sup>14</sup> The government's reluctance to honour fully its obligations to the League, reflected in the limited, sometimes nonexistent, representation of the Dominion at League conferences, was regarded by Labour as a sign of New Zealand's immaturity as a nation. Few New Zealanders were receptive to its message, however.<sup>15</sup> Even within the Labour Party, interest in foreign affairs and the League was very limited.

Perhaps because of New Zealand's political and cultural homogeneity, the voices of dissent were not numerous during the 1920s. Nevertheless, a number of anti-militarist and pacifist organisations, such as the National Peace Council, were active by 1922, often closely linked to the Labour Party. It was the members of the National Peace Council who were mainly responsible for the peace remits at the Labour Party conferences during the early 1920s. Led by its pacifist Secretary, Walter Nash, Labour joined with these organisations to organise

the No-More-War demonstrations in the main centres in 1922. The newly-formed League of Nations Union(LNU) also participated in these protests.

The LNU was founded in Christchurch in May 1922 by the Very Rev. Dr James Gibb. The New Zealand body was modelled after the British LNU and the two remained closely linked. Sir Francis Bell was the first patron and prominent politicians were made honorary officers of the organisation. By 1927, there were branches in the four main centres and eight other towns, with a membership of approximately 2,500. The LNU was not a pacifist group although some of its leaders, like Gibb, P.J. O'Regan and R.M. Laing, espoused pacifist beliefs and forged close links with pacifist groups during the 1920s, encouraging pacifists to join. Rather, it was a heterogenous organisation formed to promote League of Nations' internationalism. It was the most influential and respectable of the peace groups because it drew its supporters from the affluent and the educated. Clergymen and women were well-represented. Because of its more conservative nature, the LNU did not attract many supporters from the labour movement. Fraser and Nash were important exceptions.

From the beginning, the widespread appeal of the LNU undermined its effectiveness. Because its leaders tended to be more outspoken and extreme in their views than some sections of the membership, there was always the possibility that they would express opinions on the LNU's behalf which could alienate these members. The leadership's criticisms of the government during the 1922 Chanak crisis and their loud support for disarmament, including calls for the abandonment of the Singapore Naval

Base from 1923 and the abolition of compulsory military training, dismayed conservatives within the LNU. As a result, Gibb and his colleagues were sometimes reluctant to push controversial issues in order to preserve the organisation's fragile unity.

While the LNU acted as a pressure group, often petitioning and sending delegations to the government, its primary objective was to enlighten public opinion about the League through education, meetings and articles.

For the LNU world public opinion was to be the supreme arbiter of international conflicts, not the League itself. The League was merely to be the organ of publicity through which that public opinion was to gain the necessary information upon which to base its judgement.<sup>16</sup>

The belief that war could be prevented by the moral judgement of an educated public opinion was consistent with contemporary pacifist thinking but it conflicted with the sanctions provisions of the Covenant. The LNU considered it undesirable to emphasize these provisions because it was not confident that the League could enforce sanctions if a conflict arose. But if there was concern that the issue of sanctions would raise fundamental questions about the League in the public mind, the LNU leadership also realised how potentially divisive the issue could be for a membership ranging from pacifists to imperialists. For this reason, the LNU shelved the problem during the 1920s.<sup>17</sup>

The idea that because New Zealand was a member of the League it should support the greater interests of the international community rather than the particular interests of the British Empire, was unacceptable to the great majority of New Zealanders. Nevertheless, Labour

MPs propounded that novel belief from 1920. International arbitration and disarmament figured prominently in Labour's attacks on the government's foreign policy.<sup>18</sup> Holland did not share Massey's confidence that the best way to serve the interests of world peace was to ensure the security and power of the Empire.

Labour MPs were often critical of the apparent conflict between the policies of the Empire and the aims of the League. They charged the British Government with paying lip-service to the League's efforts to reduce international tension, and Holland decried the foolishness of the New Zealand Government for believing these efforts threatened the integrity of the Empire.<sup>19</sup> There is no denying the genuineness of Labour's support for the League but these attacks were also a political tactic to embarrass the government.<sup>20</sup> In August 1920, David Sullivan and Fraser accused the government of neglecting its disarmament obligations under the Peace Treaty, arguing that the increase in defence spending showed the Dominion had no faith in the League.<sup>21</sup> Early the following year, Holland used the prospect of an Imperial Conference to propose an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, requesting that the Dominion's delegates support disarmament and the renunciation of all war treaties, including the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.<sup>22</sup>

First signed in 1902 and renewed for ten years in 1911, the Alliance was considered vital to the maintenance of the Empire's strategic position in the Pacific by London and Wellington.<sup>23</sup> But, as a signatory of the Covenant, the British Government had agreed, under Article 20, not to be a party to such exclusive alliances. The British and Japanese



Governments were faced with the choice of either denouncing the Alliance or modifying its terms to conform with Article 21 which allowed regional understandings. After discussions in June 1920, a joint communication was sent to the League the following month advising of their intention to modify the Alliance by July 1921.<sup>24</sup>

The future of the Alliance was at the top of the agenda at the Imperial Conference in London in June 1921. Australia and New Zealand wanted it renewed but Canada believed the Alliance should be replaced by an agreement between all the Pacific powers. The deadlock was broken by the American invitation to all powers interested in the Pacific and naval affairs to attend a conference in Washington in November 1921.<sup>25</sup> New Zealand was represented by Sir John Salmond, a Supreme Court judge and former Solicitor-General.<sup>26</sup> Three major treaties emerged from Washington. The Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament restricted the capital ship strength of the Great Powers and stopped them from fortifying their Pacific naval bases. The Four-Power Treaty on Insular Possessions in the Pacific replaced the Anglo-Japanese Alliance with a broad agreement which contained no military commitments, while the Nine-Power Treaty was designed to encourage political and economic stability in China.<sup>27</sup>

Massey was less than satisfied with the results of the Washington Conference. On 18 August 1922, he made his displeasure plain during the ratification debate in the House. Massey criticised the Naval Treaty as inadequate because auxiliary vessels, submarines and aircraft were excluded. He clearly thought the Four-Power Treaty was a poor substitute

for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Dismissing the League as a body of minor states with no power behind it, he reiterated his belief that only a combination of nations led by Britain and the United States could enforce peace. It was left to the Minister of Education, James Parr, to exhibit any enthusiasm for the treaty.<sup>28</sup>

The response of the other political parties and the press was mixed.<sup>29</sup> Liberal Party leader Thomas Wilford was more optimistic than Massey. His comments on the League tended to emphasise its role as a means of peacefully settling international disputes, instead of resorting to arms. But he was as unwilling as Massey to depend on the League for New Zealand's security.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Sidey, however, strongly criticised Massey's pessimism about the prospects for peace, saying the world's leaders should back the League.<sup>31</sup> Labour considered the disarmament provisions did not go far enough. Holland was critical that the Naval Treaty appeared to have been based on financial considerations instead of ethical ones. He believed the present League was inadequate and what was needed was a League of Peoples which "will not hesitate to use all the international force at its command to forbid the occurrence of any war in the future."<sup>32</sup>

Other speakers in the House and the Legislative Council were divided whether the conference had made a long-term contribution to peace.<sup>33</sup> Some believed the Washington agreements had superseded the League.<sup>34</sup> But the suggestion that the combined efforts of the League and the conference had made an increase in New Zealand's defence spending unnecessary, was not thought worthy of comment.<sup>35</sup> The debate showed the wariness of

conservative opinion in New Zealand about the involvement of the Empire in international conferences. The suspicion that other states could not entirely be trusted not to undermine the power of the Empire, coloured the views of the government when the League attempted to build on the progress made at Washington a year later.

The Washington Conference was an important contribution to disarmament but it was not the League's triumph. The League was handicapped not only by the non-universality of its membership but by the lack of confidence in its utility by those Great Powers which were members. This was revealed by the Chanak crisis in September 1922. A small Allied force stationed in the Dardanelles neutral zone was threatened by the Turkish forces of Mustapha Kemal Pasha. Responding quickly to the British Government's call to the Dominions for assistance, the New Zealand Government offered to send troops to the area.<sup>36</sup>

On 19 September 1922, Parliament passed a motion of support for the government's action,<sup>37</sup> but LNU leaders Gibb and O'Regan were loudly critical of the government for committing New Zealand without Parliamentary authority and without informing the public. They also criticised the British Government's handling of the affair and urged the referral of the dispute to the League. This outspokenness was attacked as unpatriotic by the government and the press.<sup>38</sup> The Labour Party was also unhappy about the government's actions. Holland insisted Parliament should have discussed the British request because "wars should be made by the people of New Zealand." He questioned Britain's motives and the importance of the Turkish situation, but when he proposed a motion

that the League should become involved,<sup>39</sup> Reform and Liberal MPs thought the idea ridiculous. Parr declared:

...one might just as well suggest that an innocent three-months-old lamb should attempt to discipline a savage wolf as to suggest that the League of Nations as at present constituted, without any disciplinary force to back its advice or its decisions, is or can possibly be an effective weapon to use where Mustapha Pasha is concerned.<sup>40</sup>

Massey agreed, saying he looked to the British league of nations to settle the dispute.<sup>41</sup> In the face of this patriotic fervour, the League clearly counted for very little. Certainly, the eventual settlement owed nothing to it.

The League's disarmament and arbitration activities had been largely eclipsed by the initiatives of the Great Powers. This situation changed in 1923 when the League attempted a major initiative. The Fourth Assembly approved the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, which attempted to overcome the reluctance of member-states to reduce the level of their armaments by combining the principle of disarmament with the need for security. It was an ambitious concept and the culmination of three years work.<sup>42</sup>

The Draft Treaty was designed to strengthen the principles of mutual assistance of Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant, and to facilitate the application of Article 8 on disarmament.<sup>43</sup> Article 2 of the treaty stated that the signatories undertook to assist any other signatory which was attacked, provided that it had carried out the treaty's disarmament provisions. In the event of a dispute, the League Council was required to define the aggressor within four days and determine the measures to be taken against that state. The powers of the Council

during the emergency were extensive. It could immediately apply economic sanctions, specify which state or states were to supply the assistance it required, and the type of assistance to be provided. The Council would also control communications, transportation and financial matters associated with the operations, and appoint the commander-in-chief. In effect, these provisions required the signatories to turn over control of their national resources to the Council at any time and in any circumstances. The Council could also establish demilitarised zones and require the aggressor to pay reparations.

Several members of the League, including Canada, had already expressed their disagreement with Article 10 of the Covenant, which implied that in the event of a threat to any member-state all League members, no matter how remote from the dispute, were required to assist.<sup>44</sup> The treaty stipulated that no signatory would be required to assist in operations outside their own continent. Signatories were allowed to conclude mutual defence agreements among themselves, so long as their sole purpose was to carry out the measures of the Draft Treaty and were approved by the Council. In the event of aggression, the parties to these regional agreements could take action without first obtaining the sanction of the Council.

No state could claim the benefit of the treaty until it had undertaken to reduce its armaments in accordance with a plan to be drawn up by the Council. Each state was to furnish an estimate of the reduction it could effect in virtue of the guaranties accorded it, and the Council was to draw up a plan on the basis of these estimates. The

greatest weakness of the treaty was that no timetable for this process was specified. The treaty would remain inoperative until the Council had completed this extremely difficult task. Once a government had approved the plan it had two years in which to carry out the reduction, with five-yearly revisions thereafter.

The Assembly requested all governments, League members or not, to submit observations on the treaty.<sup>45</sup> Though New Zealand chose not to reply, preferring to leave the matter in the hands of the British Government,<sup>46</sup> the Dominion's defence chiefs were not enamoured with the treaty. Army commander Major-General E.W.C. Chaytor believed the continental limitation on the treaty's obligations could mean that in the event of an attack by Japan, New Zealand could expect little or no assistance. Further, he warned:

Acceptance of these provisions would make the League of Nations a superstate with powers of taxation and of declaring war and would mean the breakup of the British Empire since our allegiance would be transferred from H.M. the King to the Council of the League which might even require action against another State of the Empire.

He was certain no important state would accept the treaty and he sharply criticised Lord Robert Cecil for his part in its preparation. He said: "...one can only wonder that one of H.M. Ministers, who should be working for the Empire, could have drafted such proposals. To whom does he give allegiance? to His Majesty or to the Council of the League?"<sup>47</sup> In Chaytor's mind it was impossible to do both. The Navy's Commodore A. F. Beal echoed Chaytor's views.<sup>48</sup>

Of the twenty-nine replies to the League, eighteen were favourable but accompanied by reservations. France and Italy approved of the

treaty but the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain rejected it outright. Ever since Cecil's initial proposals in 1922, the British Government had been concerned about their possible effect on the Empire. The Foreign Office, the Service Departments and the Committee of Imperial Defence were critical of the disarmament provisions. There were doubts whether every government had the political will to carry out the prearranged plans for military co-operation. Most importantly, the limitation of the obligation to give assistance to states situated in the same part of the world, had significant ramifications for the Empire. Its worldwide spread would necessitate British involvement practically everywhere. There was also the theoretical possibility that one part of the Empire might be involved while the other parts were not. The British Government was not prepared to accept such a large increase in its obligations or an agreement which threatened the unity of the Empire.<sup>49</sup>

The difficulty of enforcing sanctions had been demonstrated just as the treaty was being completed, by the Corfu incident. During August 1923, an Italian general was murdered in Greece which resulted in the occupation of Corfu by Italy.<sup>50</sup> The Greek Government appealed to the League under Article 15 of the Covenant but the Council did not intervene. The dispute was eventually resolved but it demonstrated that the Council could not be depended upon to address a crisis with resolve and unanimity. Indeed, the prospect of implementing sanctions against Italy under Article 16 of the Covenant had greatly alarmed the British Government. At the Imperial Conference in October 1923, the other delegates shared Massey's relief that Article 16 had not been invoked. He believed

that it was dangerous and predicted the Article might be responsible for escalating a minor dispute into a serious conflict.<sup>51</sup> Massey was obviously speaking from an imperial point of view for although New Zealand was a small country it never identified itself with the other small states in the League. Sir James Allen thought it was probably just as well that "any illusions which may have been cherished by some of the smaller Powers with regard to the extent to which the League could protect them and their territorial integrity by the adoption of coercive measures should have been shattered."<sup>52</sup>

The Imperial Conference met too soon after the 1923 Assembly to allow a full discussion of the Draft Treaty.<sup>53</sup> Even so, there was clearly little enthusiasm for it.<sup>54</sup> Massey intimated that any extension of the sanctions provisions of the Covenant was unacceptable.<sup>55</sup> The British ministers said little on the subject and there was no opportunity for governmental discussion after the conference because of the British general election. The change of government in Britain caused consideration of the treaty to be put off until April 1924.

The British Labour Government moved quickly to implement its foreign policy, which aimed to enhance international security by creating a system based upon reconciliation, arbitration and disarmament through a revitalised League of Nations. The abandonment of the Singapore Base was the obvious moral gesture which might induce others to make similar reductions in their armaments.<sup>56</sup> Massey was unable to appreciate such exalted motives and seems to have regarded them as mere political cant.<sup>57</sup> Both he and the Governor-General, Lord Jellicoe, were furious that the British Government was prepared to put its faith in the



League at the expense of the security of Australia and New Zealand.<sup>58</sup> Massey had long warned that the League was dangerous because it provided an illusion of security which could hinder proper defence preparations.<sup>59</sup> He therefore took upon himself the task of reminding the British Government where its responsibilities lay.

In a forthright cable, Massey declared that the British decision jeopardised not only New Zealand's security but, by undermining British naval supremacy, it also threatened the position of the Empire and world peace. The British confidence in the League was given short shrift. Massey told British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald:

You say your 'Government stands for international co-operation through a strengthened and enlarged League of Nations.' In reply to that I must say that if the defence of the Empire is to depend upon the League of Nations only, then it may turn out to have been a pity that the League was ever brought into being.

Massey pointed out that the League had not yet been able to prevent hostile acts between nations.<sup>60</sup> It was to no avail. MacDonald announced the abandonment of the Base on 18 March 1924.<sup>61</sup> League supporters in New Zealand had reason to expect that the British Government would also approve the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance.

To the New Zealand Government's relief, the British Cabinet rejected the treaty.<sup>62</sup> At the end of May 1924, a draft reply for the League was sent to the Dominions for comment. The British Government stated that the treaty

holds out no serious prospect of advantage sufficient to compensate the world for the immense complication of international relations which it would create, the uncertainty of the practical effect of its clauses, and the consequent difficulty of conducting national policy.

It did not believe the Council could determine an aggressor within four days, even if a definition of what constituted aggression had been included in the treaty. Any response to that aggression would necessarily be slow and no prearranged plan could possibly cover every contingency. Further, the British Government did not believe the League could depend on every government to carry out their obligations. It also suggested that in order for Britain to fulfil its obligations under the treaty, disarmament was out of the question. Indeed, it was probable that an increase in armaments would be necessary because of its worldwide interests.

Criticism was also directed at the provision for regional agreements. The British considered this might lead to the reappearance of military alliances. There was also the possibility that the parties to these agreements might take action which subsequently could not be supported by the Council. It was suggested that the continental limitation on the obligation to assist would create serious problems for the British Empire. If one of its members was involved in a conflict, the other members of the Empire could not remain aloof. The British Government even implied that Dominion opposition had been a significant factor behind Britain's rejection of the treaty. Lastly, it was thought undesirable for an advisory body like the Council to be invested with such extensive powers.<sup>63</sup>

New Zealand had no difficulty in approving the British draft. Massey told MacDonald that the treaty's proposals were futile and a danger to world peace. He was pleased the Empire had not surrendered its

freedom of action to the League.<sup>64</sup> With the approval of the Dominions, Britain despatched its formal reply to the League on 5 July 1924. The Canadian and Australian Governments sent their own replies separately.<sup>65</sup>

Massey must have hoped that the demise of the Draft Treaty was a sign that the British Government's infatuation with the League had ended. He was disappointed. The Home Secretary, Arthur Henderson, and the Lord President of the Council, Lord Parmoor, were strong supporters of the League and they were the driving force behind the British Government's continued search for a formula to strengthen the League.<sup>66</sup> As the principal supporter of the defunct treaty, the French Government was also anxious to find a comprehensive security agreement centring on the League. In talks between MacDonald and French Premier Edouard Herriot in July 1924, it was agreed that security should be linked to the limitation of armaments but that the backbone of a new agreement must be a system of arbitration.<sup>67</sup> At the Assembly in September 1924, they proposed a wide extension of the principle of arbitration; the signature by all states of the Optional Clause of the 1920 Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice;<sup>68</sup> and the calling of a general disarmament conference.<sup>69</sup> These proposals formed the basis of the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes which the Assembly recommended, on 2 October 1924, be accepted by the members of the League.<sup>70</sup>

The Geneva Protocol, as it became known, was a long and complicated document closely tied to the Covenant.<sup>71</sup> The most elaborate provisions were in respect to arbitration. The signatories were required to accept

Paragraph 2 of Article 36 of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, more familiarly known as the Optional Clause.<sup>72</sup> This recognised the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court in all justiciable disputes, although it was possible for reservations to be made.

The Protocol attempted to tighten the provisions of Article 15 of the Covenant. The intention was to close the so-called 'gap' in the Covenant by eliminating the right of League members to go to war other than in self-defence. As the Covenant stood, if the Council was unable to agree unanimously on a settlement to a dispute, a League member could enforce its claim by war without violating the Covenant.<sup>73</sup> Articles 4, 5 and 6 of the Protocol were to ensure that all disputes were sent to arbitration. If the Council was unable to effect a settlement under Article 15 of the Covenant, the disputing parties, or the Council, could refer the matter to a Committee of Arbitrators. If one of the parties claimed that the dispute arose out of a matter which was within its domestic jurisdiction, the Committee was to seek the advice of the Permanent Court and abide by that advice. The Committee's decision was binding.

In the event of a dispute, the parties were not allowed to begin military preparations. The Council was to monitor the situation and investigate any infraction. Should hostilities break out as a result of such preparations or because a state had refused to submit to arbitration or carry out the recommendations of an arbitral body, the Council was required to apply sanctions against the aggressor.

The sanctions provisions were largely based on Article 16 of the Covenant but included elements from the Draft Treaty. A signatory was required to implement the economic, financial and military sanctions determined by the Council "in the degree which its geographical position and its particular situation as regards armaments allow." If the victim of aggression was a party to a separate security agreement, the other parties to that agreement could not go to its assistance until the Council had agreed to apply sanctions.

Just as with the Draft Treaty, the Geneva Protocol would not come into force until a disarmament plan could be agreed upon. Article 17 of the Protocol stipulated that a disarmament conference would open on 15 June 1925 but only if the majority of the permanent members of the Council and ten other League members had ratified the Protocol by 1 May 1925. This timetable was a reflection of the wave of constructive enthusiasm and optimism which inspired the delegates to the Fifth Assembly.

Certainly, among those groups in New Zealand which supported the objectives of the League, there was the expectation that disarmament and world peace were now attainable goals. The Labour Party reacted enthusiastically to the British Government's League-oriented foreign policy. At the Party conference in April 1924, a resolution of support for the British Government's efforts on disarmament was adopted and in Parliament MacDonald's initiative received loud praise from the Labour leaders.<sup>74</sup> The Party once again joined with the peace groups to organise large-scale anti-war demonstrations in September 1924, which were

well-supported.<sup>75</sup> Yet, in spite of this activity, the New Zealand Government appears to have been caught off-guard by events at Geneva.

On 13 September 1924, Massey learned that the British delegation had proposed that the British Empire should accept the Optional Clause.<sup>76</sup> The Empire countries had not accepted the Clause when they ratified the Statute of the Permanent Court in 1921 because they believed it gave the Court greater powers than Article 14 of the Covenant provided for and threatened British belligerent rights at sea. Three years on, Allen and the Australian representative were unenthusiastic about the British proposal for the same reasons. The British legal experts reassured the Dominion delegates that acceptance would be accompanied by reservations which excluded disputes which had occurred before the date of signature, and future actions in disputes sanctioned by the League. Observing that MacDonald had practically committed Britain to this course at the Assembly, Allen requested instructions on the attitude he was to take.<sup>77</sup> His cable had not contained any advice to the government but Bell interpreted it as favouring the British proposal. In a sharply-worded memorandum, he stated that New Zealand could not agree to surrender the Empire's maritime belligerent rights simply because MacDonald had made some promise.<sup>78</sup>

Sir Francis Henry Dillon Bell was responsible for drafting many of the communications with London and thus was probably the architect of much of the Massey Government's foreign policy. Born in Nelson in 1851, Bell was the son of Sir Francis Dillon Bell who served as a Cabinet minister, Speaker of the House, Leader of the Legislative Council and



Sir Francis Bell

New Zealand's Agent-General in London. After studying for the bar in England, Bell returned to practise law in Wellington in 1874. He became Mayor of Wellington in 1891 and in 1893 he was elected to Parliament for Wellington City. Disenchanted with politics, Bell did not stand for re-election in 1896 but his friendship with Massey led to his appointment to the Legislative Council in 1912. As Leader of the Council(1912-1926, 1927-1928), Attorney-General(1918-1926) and Minister of External Affairs (1923-1926), Bell was Massey's closest colleague and his deputy from 1920. Though as forceful and domineering a character as Massey,

succeeding him briefly as Prime Minister in May 1925, Bell had limited political ambition, preferring to act behind the scenes.

Widely regarded as New Zealand's leading constitutional lawyer, he grasped political principles as distinct from political interests, and provided an intellectual basis for Massey's imperialism.<sup>79</sup> He believed the Dominions must be consulted on imperial matters by London but considered that only the British Government was qualified to conduct the Empire's foreign affairs.<sup>80</sup> Bell was almost certainly the only member of Cabinet who believed the League might have an important role to play in the maintenance of peace but he was never able to convince Massey of this.<sup>81</sup>

For New Zealand the primary issue raised by the Optional Clause was the likely effect of the Permanent Court's jurisdiction upon the exercise of British seapower. In wartime the Empire claimed the right to blockade enemy ports, to stop and search neutral shipping and confiscate their cargoes if it could be proved to be contraband of war. The Admiralty feared British rights would be greatly reduced if they were subject to the review of a body of foreign jurists, and this view greatly influenced the New Zealand Government's thinking.<sup>82</sup> Massey told Allen: "...this Government will not be party to or authorise you to concur in any form of surrender of interpretation of British rights in Maritime warfare to a Court constituted of a majority of judges from foreign countries."<sup>83</sup>

Allen took the offensive at the meeting of the Empire delegates in



Geneva on 17 September 1924. He began by expressing his unease with the draft Protocol. He argued that it went beyond Article 16 of the Covenant by committing the Empire to use the Royal Navy in a League conflict. Allen suggested this might involve the Empire in a war with countries with which it had no quarrel. He complained that the British Government seemed to be trying to force the hand of the Dominions. He accused it of a lack of candour because it had not sent the Foreign Office documents on the Optional Clause, written between March and July 1924 and somewhat unfavourable in their conclusions, until early September 1924.<sup>84</sup> New Zealand's attitude annoyed Parmoor and Henderson.<sup>85</sup> Parmoor told Allen that the Dominion had clearly not understood the object of the British proposals.<sup>86</sup> But Allen privately questioned the British motives. "The position is extremely difficult," he told Massey, "as the British Government are using every endeavour they can to find some formula that can be agreed to by them and the French, and they are largely influenced, I fear, by political considerations and a possible election in Great Britain."<sup>87</sup> It appeared likely that the British would be prepared to sacrifice imperial unity on this issue to achieve their objectives.

The Dominions were acutely aware that if the British Government signed the Protocol, they would be committed also. Allen thus endeavoured not only to remove the most offensive parts of the draft Protocol, but also to give the Empire more time to agree on a united response. He told the Assembly's Third Committee that he had always interpreted the obligation under Article 16 to participate in a League-sanctioned operation as a moral one. New Zealand was not in favour of making it a

legal obligation because a moral obligation was more likely to be acceptable and effective. Allen also objected to the Japanese amendment which would allow the Protocol to cover domestic matters. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were concerned that their restrictive immigration policies might be overturned by the Permanent Court, allowing a flood of non-white immigrants.<sup>88</sup> In the event, the Assembly decided the amendment raised too many difficulties and rejected it.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps Allen's most important contribution was his suggestion that instead of recommending the acceptance of the Protocol, the Assembly should merely suggest that the League members give the proposal their "earnest consideration".<sup>90</sup> On this basis the Dominions could give their assent to the resolution of 2 October 1924 because no commitment to the Protocol was involved.<sup>91</sup>

The attitude of the British delegation may have given the Dominion delegates the impression that the British Government was firmly behind the Geneva Protocol. This was far from the truth. MacDonald's personal commitment to the ideals of disarmament and arbitration was genuine enough but he was unhappy that Britain would have to assume a disproportionate share of the burden of enforcing the Protocol. The Service Departments were as hostile to the Protocol as they had been to the Draft Treaty. One must seriously question whether the Protocol would have been accepted by the British Labour Government in light of the divisions in Cabinet and the opposition of the Dominions.<sup>92</sup> But the government fell within a month of the Assembly resolution on the Protocol and the problem passed to Stanley Baldwin's Conservative Government.

The new British Government faced a dilemma. The Geneva Protocol, as it stood, was unacceptable but outright rejection would damage Britain's relations with France and other European countries. It was decided that a decision on the Protocol must be put off until a comprehensive review could be made.<sup>93</sup> Informing the League of this decision, Baldwin stated that an important factor was the need to secure the agreement of the Dominions before taking further action.<sup>94</sup> On 19 December 1924, the British Government suggested a special meeting of the Empire Prime Ministers to discuss the matter.<sup>95</sup> Massey was prepared to attend but the other Dominion leaders considered such a meeting unnecessary.<sup>96</sup>

The New Zealand Government had already stated on 13 November 1924 that it could not accept the Optional Clause, principally because of the question of belligerent rights.<sup>97</sup> New Zealand also shared the British and Australian concern that Egypt might use the Clause to challenge the extensive British military presence there, particularly Britain's control of the Suez Canal.<sup>98</sup> Nearly six weeks later, in a preliminary statement of the Dominion's attitude to the Protocol as a whole, Massey told Baldwin that it was "mischievous and only possible of effect in minor issues between small Nations." He acknowledged that Britain was in a difficult position but he believed the Protocol was doomed in any case because disagreement over disarmament was inevitable.<sup>99</sup> Yet, the New Zealand Government was worried that the British Government might still accept a compromise solution on the Protocol. The appointment of outspoken League supporter Viscount Cecil of Chelwood to the Cabinet did nothing to allay these fears.<sup>100</sup> Massey and Bell considered it vital,

therefore, to tell the British in the strongest possible terms that the Protocol was unacceptable to New Zealand in any form.

The Dominion made its formal statement on the Geneva Protocol on 6 January 1925. Massey described the Protocol as "dangerous in its effect, crudely and hurridly drafted, and capable of various interpretations." He restated his objection to the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court, arguing that no reservation would safeguard British belligerent rights or New Zealand's immigration laws. He then suggested that the provision that no nation could assist a victim of aggression until the Council gave its authority was ludicrous because it played into the aggressor's hands. Massey was also critical of the extension of the Council's authority under the Protocol, and he believed the sanctions provisions would require "drastic" amendment. He concluded by dismissing the argument that the Empire's decision was required by the March 1925 meeting of the Council in order for the League to hold a disarmament conference during 1925. Frankly sceptical about disarmament, Massey did not consider such a conference was sufficient justification for the Empire to be rushed into making an important decision without proper consultation. Baldwin was urged to tell the League that the British Government would not make its decision until that consultation had taken place.<sup>101</sup>

The replies from the other Dominions were in a similar vein. They too found compulsory arbitration and the sanctions articles unacceptable. But there was also growing concern about the effect of the Protocol on the Empire's relations with the United States.<sup>102</sup> The opposition

of the Dominions and a negative report by the Committee of Imperial Defence left the British Cabinet little choice but to reject the Protocol.<sup>103</sup> In early March 1925 a draft of the British reply to the League was sent to the Dominions. The New Zealand Government approved of its "general and commonsense point of view" but reminded the British Government that the Dominion had its own reasons for rejecting the Protocol, which the Foreign Secretary could mention at the League if necessary.<sup>104</sup>

On 12 March 1925, the Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, announced Britain's decision to the League Council. He said the Geneva Protocol did not merely complete the Covenant, as it was claimed, but altered both its balance and spirit. The emphasis on sanctions moved the League from promoting friendly co-operation to preserving peace by organising war. Britain did not believe all-embracing instruments like the Protocol were the answer to world insecurity. The British Government preferred a less ambitious scheme consisting of "special arrangements in order to meet special needs" framed in the spirit of the Covenant.<sup>105</sup> Although Chamberlain's proposal was short on specifics, it was not merely a ploy to counter the anticipated criticism of the British rejection from Europe. The British Government was already engaged in discussions with France, Belgium and Germany which eventually produced the Locarno treaties.<sup>106</sup>

Few people in New Zealand, outside government circles and the LNU, knew much about the Geneva Protocol or the reasons for the Dominion's rejection of it.<sup>107</sup> Harry Holland was unhappy that the decisions had been made by the government without any reference to Parliament.<sup>108</sup>

Even when Parliament was given the opportunity to discuss the Protocol in September 1925, the Prime Minister took little part in the debate. In fact, the government seems to have considered it unnecessary to defend its decision on the Protocol. There was no point, said Sir James Parr, when it was already dead.<sup>109</sup>

This attitude pleased neither the Nationalists nor the Labour Party. Nationalist leader George Forbes argued that there must be discussion of foreign policy so that the government could act with the confidence of the people. Thomas Wilford admitted MPs were ill-informed on foreign affairs and he supported a proposal for a Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee as a means of improving the situation. But while the Nationalists took the government to task for not keeping Parliament sufficiently informed about its foreign policy, they did not disagree with that policy.

Wilford accepted the government's contention that the Permanent Court may have had the power under the Protocol to force New Zealand to amend its immigration legislation, and he was as appalled by the prospect as Parr. He also agreed that the Protocol would not have been effective while the United States, the Soviet Union and Germany remained outside the League. Wilford opposed any extension of the Empire's obligations under the Covenant and warned that the Dominions would not go to war to guarantee European frontiers.<sup>110</sup> He was one of several speakers who suggested that the Empire should keep its external commitments to a minimum.

Predictably, the Labour view contrasted sharply with that of the conservative parties. During the earlier debate on the Supply Vote for the Defence Department, Labour MPs had castigated the government for failing to fulfil its disarmament obligations under the Peace Treaty. Noting that New Zealand's contribution to the League in 1925 was £9,607, W.J. Jordan thought that it seemed contradictory to spend that money on promoting peace and at the same time advocate increased spending on preparing for war.<sup>111</sup> The debate on the Protocol provided an opportunity for Labour to express its concern about the prospects for peace and disarmament in the wake of that instrument's demise.

Peter Fraser stated that the Geneva Protocol had contained the only practical proposal for disarmament so far and he was disappointed that a world disarmament conference would not be held during 1925. He described the Protocol as an "international test of sincerity" and he thought New Zealand's objections were of the "most spurious nature". Holland chided the conservative members for their preoccupation with the Protocol's sanctions provisions, saying its main function was the prevention of wars not their prosecution. Both men rubbished the suggestion that the Permanent Court could have interfered in the Dominion's domestic legislation. Fraser said: "...the whole tone of the criticism by the New Zealand Government is small; rather the product of a pettifogging lawyer than of statesmen with a world outlook."

The Labour leaders strongly defended the former British Government during the debate. Holland praised MacDonald's role in the development of the Protocol and he speculated that the government's decision to

reject it was influenced by the fact that it was the work of a Labour government. He noted that while New Zealand had protested against the Protocol when the British Labour Party was in power, the government was now satisfied to leave the Locarno negotiations completely in the hands of Baldwin's Conservative Government. It seemed to him that the Coates Government was content to allow Chamberlain to dictate what its views on foreign affairs should be.<sup>112</sup> Gordon Coates quickly refuted the charge by saying that his government would not automatically support the British Government but would offer its opinions on any policy which affected the Dominion, and it would agree only if that policy was completely acceptable.<sup>113</sup>

An acceptable foreign policy for New Zealand was one which placed the security of the British Empire first. The League was a complicating factor because it introduced the possibility of divided loyalties. Massey had warned that the interests of the Empire and the League might prove to be incompatible and that the Empire countries might have to choose between their loyalty to the Empire and their obligations under the Covenant.<sup>114</sup> Thus the League was regarded with suspicion, even hostility, by the New Zealand Government. The collaboration of the British Labour Government in the development of the Geneva Protocol seemed to justify Massey's fears. He saw the League's quest for water-tight collective security arrangements as a threat because it undermined the special defence relationship between Britain and the Dominions. Instruments like the Protocol increased British responsibilities and subordinated imperial independence to the direction of the Council. But the League was also a rival because its members were seeking the same



protection from Britain which the Dominions regarded as their exclusive right. Thus, a combination of self-interest, genuine doubt about the League's capabilities, and a belief that the League's proper role was one of moral leadership only, led New Zealand to reject the Geneva Protocol.

## REFERENCES

- 1 NZPD, 2 Sep 1919, Vol.184, pp.39-40
- 2 Lyttelton Times, 26 Nov, 15 Dec 1919, quoted in McGibbon, I.C. Blue-water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-1942. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1981, p.52
- 3 NZ Herald, 24 Feb 1920; NZPD, 6 Jul 1920, Vol.186, p.152; 6 Oct 1921, p.291
- 4 NZPD, 6 Oct 1921, Vol.191, p.291; 26 Jan 1922, Vol.193, p.698; 6 Jul 1923, Vol.200, p.779
- 5 NZPD, 19 Oct 1921, Vol.191, p.621; 5 Jul 1922, Vol.195, pp.93-95; Wood, F.L.W. The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1958, p.30
- 6 NZPD, 23 Sep 1920, Vol.187, p.1205; see 27 Aug 1920, p.476
- 7 Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.48; O'Farrell, P.J. Harry Holland: Militant Socialist. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1964, p.57; Brown, B. The Rise of New Zealand Labour: A History of the New Zealand Labour Party from 1916 to 1940. Wellington: Price Milburn, 1962, pp.40,60,68-69; Thorn, J. Peter Fraser: New Zealand's Wartime Prime Minister. London: Odhams Press, 1952, pp.31,43,57
- 8 Burdon, p.37
- 9 Brown, p.178
- 10 Ibid, pp.108-109
- 11 United Federation of Labour 6th Annual Conference/NZ Labour Party 3rd Annual Conference. Wellington, July 1919. Wellington: Maori-land Worker Co, 1919; Brown, pp.109-114
- 12 NZ Labour Party 7th Annual Conference. Christchurch, 2 Apr 1923, NZ Labour Party Papers 270:345
- 13 NZPD, 17 Mar 1921, Vol.190, p.196; 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, p.496; 20 Jun 1923, Vol.200, p.86; 6 Jul 1923, p.785
- 14 NZPD, 17 Mar 1921, Vol.190, p.196,270; 21 Jun 1923, Vol.200, p.124; 6 Jul 1923, pp.766,785
- 15 Wood, p.24
- 16 Attwood, B.M. Apostles of Peace: The New Zealand League of Nations Union. M.Phil. Research Essay, University of Auckland, 1979,

pp.34-35

- 17 Ibid, pp.18-54; Grant, D. Out in the Cold: Pacifists and Conscientious Objectors in New Zealand during World War II. Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986, pp.21-23. On the British LNU see Birn, D.S. The League of Nations Union 1918-1945. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. On the Canadian League of Nations Society see Veatch, pp.42-45
- 18 NZPD, 3 Sep 1924, Vol.204, p.594; 19 Sep 1922, Vol.197, p.87; Brown, p.119
- 19 NZPD, 4 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.69-72
- 20 Brown, p.116
- 21 NZPD, 27 Aug 1920, Vol.187, pp.475-476, 489
- 22 NZPD, 17 Mar 1921, Vol.190, pp.193, 196
- 23 On the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Washington Conference see Nish, I.H. Alliance in Decline: A Study of Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-1923. London: Athlone Press, 1972; Lissington, M.P. New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941. Wellington: Government Printer, 1972, Chapter 3; Wigley, pp.131ff; McGibbon, Chapter 4
- 24 Nish, pp.288-303
- 25 Imp Conf 1921, 9th-31st meetings, 29 Jun-27 Jul 1921, G40:2; Nish, pp.338-339; McGibbon, pp.82-83
- 26 See Downey, P.J. Sir John Salmond. In New Zealand's Heritage. V. pp.1895-1899; Hankey to Lloyd George, 11 Nov 1921, 20 Jan 1922, Lloyd George Papers 404:2; NZPD, 11 Oct 1921, Vol.191, pp.386-387
- 27 McGibbon, pp.87-91; Conference on the Limitation of Armaments... AJHR. 1922, A-5; Salmond to Massey, 4 Jan 1922, PM9:4
- 28 NZPD, 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, pp.478-484
- 29 Lissington. New Zealand and Japan, pp.53-54
- 30 NZPD, 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, pp.486-489; see 2 Sep 1919, Vol.184, pp.74-77; 18 Oct 1921, Vol.191, p.571; 5 Jul 1923, Vol.200, p.738; 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.749-750
- 31 NZPD, 19 Jul 1922, Vol.195, p.532
- 32 NZPD, 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, pp.490-496
- 33 NZPD, 5 Jul 1922, Vol.195, pp.89ff; 13 Jul 1922, p.345; 14 Jul 1922, pp.399ff; 6 Sep 1922, Vol.196, pp.907ff

- 34 NZPD, 26 Jan 1922, Vol.193, p.698; 4 Jul 1922, Vol.195, p.73
- 35 NZPD, 20 Jan 1922, Vol.193, p.578
- 36 See Ross, A. The Chanak Crisis. In New Zealand's Heritage. VI. pp. 2152-2156; Roskill. II, pp.282ff; Wigley, pp.162ff; Sales, P.M. W.M. Hughes and the Chanak Crisis of 1922. Australian Journal of Politics and History. 17.3, Dec 1971, pp.392-405
- 37 NZPD, 19 Sep 1922, Vol.197, pp.77ff
- 38 Attwood, pp.47-48
- 39 Minutes of Parl. Labour Party meeting, 19 Sep 1922, Labour Party Papers 270:11; NZPD, 19 Sep 1922, Vol.197, pp.84-87,105
- 40 NZPD, 19 Sep 1922, Vol.197, pp.109-110
- 41 Ibid, p.116
- 42 For the background of the Draft Treaty see Walters, pp.217ff; Zimmermann, pp.334ff; Orde, A. Great Britain and International Security 1920-1926. London: Royal Historical Society, 1978, pp.38ff; Cecil, pp.152ff; Carter, G.M. The British Commonwealth and International Security: The Role of the Dominions 1919-1939. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947, pp.108-113
- 43 For the text of the Draft Treaty see LNOJ. SS16. Annex 10(1)
- 44 On Canadian opposition to Article 10 see Veatch, Chapters 5 & 6
- 45 Sec-Gen to PMNZ, 9 Mar 1923, AD1:51/866/1. On the treaty see files AD1:51/866/1 & 51/866/2
- 46 GGNZ to SSCols, 27 Jul 1923, AD1:51/866/1
- 47 Chaytor(Maj-Gen. Commanding NZ Military Forces) to R.H. Rhodes(Min. Defence), 26 Jul 1923, 16 Jan 1924, AD1:51/866/1
- 48 A.F. Beal(Com. Commanding NZ Station) to Rhodes, 26 May 1924, AD1:51/866/1
- 49 Orde, pp.38-40,44 n.3
- 50 On the Italo-Greek crisis see Barros, J. The Corfu Incident of 1923: Mussolini and the League of Nations. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965
- 51 Imp Conf 1923, 6th meeting, 11 Oct 1923, EA11:11
- 52 Report on 4th Assembly, pp.19-21, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 53 Imp Conf 1923, 7th meeting, 11 Oct 1923, EA11:11; Roskill. II, p.348

- 54 J. Pope(Canadian U-SSExt.Affairs) to Sec-Gen, 19 Jun 1923, DCER.III, pp.534-535
- 55 Imp Conf 1923, 6th meeting, 11 Oct 1923, EA11:11
- 56 SSCols to GGNZ, 6 Mar 1924, G48:N/35
- 57 McGibbon, pp.131-132; Burdon, p.191
- 58 Jellicoe to Massey, 7 Mar 1924, G48:N/35
- 59 NZPD, 18 Aug 1922, Vol.196, p.484
- 60 GGNZ to SSCols, 11 Mar 1924; see Massey to Jellicoe, 8 Mar 1924; Jellicoe to Massey, 9 Mar 1924, G48:N/35
- 61 Roskill. II, pp.360-361; SSCols to GGNZ, 17 Mar 1924, G48:N/35
- 62 Orde, p.45; Roskill. II, p.363
- 63 Reply from British Government, 5 Jul 1924, LNOJ. SS26. Annex 3
- 64 GGNZ to SSCols, 30 May 1924, G5:101
- 65 See Reply from Australian Government, 4 Jul 1924; Reply from Canadian Government, 9 Jul 1924, LNOJ. SS26. Annex 3; Hudson, W.J., pp. 45-47; Cecil, p.158
- 66 Winkler, H.R. Arthur Henderson. In Craig, G.A. & Gilbert, F. (eds) The Diplomats. II. New York: Atheneum, 1968, pp.314-315; Orde, p.69; Carlton, D. MacDonald Versus Henderson: The Foreign Policy of the Second Labour Government. London: Macmillan, 1970, p.73
- 67 Scott, p.104
- 68 On the Statute of the Permanent Court see Hudson, M.O. The Permanent Court of International Justice; A Treatise. New York: Macmillan, 1934, Chapters 7 & 8
- 69 Report on 5th Assembly, p.53, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 70 For the background of the Geneva Protocol see Walters, Chapter 20; Burton, pp.247-252; Zimmern, pp.345ff; Orde, pp.68ff; Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1924. London: Oxford University Press, 1926, pp.16-64; Carter, pp.113ff
- 71 Zimmern, p.357; Cecil, p.159
- 72 On the Optional Clause see Hudson, M.O., Chapter 20
- 73 Walters, p.271

- 74 NZ Labour Party 8th Annual Conference. Dunedin, 21 Apr 1924, Labour Party Papers 270:346; NZPD, 3 Sep 1924, Vol.204, pp.591-592,594
- 75 Brown, p.115; Sinclair. Walter Nash, pp.67-68
- 76 SSCols to GGNZ, 20 Nov 1924, enc. Summaries of meetings of BED..., 3rd meeting, 11 Sep 1924, EA2:111/16/3(1)
- 77 SSCols to GGNZ, 6 Sep 1924, encs., G2:61; Allen to PMO, 13 Sep 1924, G49:52/7a
- 78 Bell to Massey, 16 Sep 1924, G49:52/7a; see SSCols to GGNZ, 6 Sep 1924, appended minutes by Parr & Bell, G2:61; Bell to Fergusson, 3 Nov 1924, G49:52/7a
- 79 Gardner. Massey - The Farmer Politician, p.1969; Gardner. W.J. Massey in Power, pp.7-8,19; McLintock, A.H.(ed) An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. II. Wellington: Government Printer, 1966, p.168; Stewart, pp.289ff; Burdon, pp.35,60
- 80 NZPD, 9 Feb 1923, Vol.199, pp.31-34; 1 Jul 1925, Vol.206, p.137; 9 Aug 1928, Vol.217, p.77; Stewart, pp.273-274; 'The External Relations of New Zealand'. Address by Bell to Empire Parliamentary Assoc., London, 18 May 1926, IT1:25/1/2(2)
- 81 Stewart, pp.221-222
- 82 McGibbon, pp.144-146
- 83 Massey to Allen, 16 Sep 1924, quoted in Allen to Massey, 17 Sep 1924, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 84 SSCols to GGNZ, 6 Sep 1924, EA2:106/2/7(1); SSCols to GGNZ, 6 Sep 1924, G2:61
- 85 BED, 4th meeting, 17 Sep 1924, EA2:111/16/3(1); Allen to Massey, 17 Sep 1924, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 86 Parmoor to Allen, 17 Sep 1924, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 87 Allen to Massey, 17 Sep 1924, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 88 BED, 9th meeting, 28 Sep 1924, EA2:111/16/3(1); LNOJ. SS26. 5th Assembly. 3rd Cmte, 11th meeting, 27 Sep 1924, p.86; Groom to Bruce, 2 Oct 1924, Groom, pp.178-179; Hudson, W.J., pp.52-54; Casey to Bruce, 4 Dec 1924, My Dear P.M., pp.2-3
- 89 Walters, p.274
- 90 LNOJ. SS24. 5th Assembly. 1st Cmte, 10th meeting, 27 Sep 1924, p.64
- 91 SSCols to GGNZ, 27 Sep 1924, G5:101; BED, 9th meeting, 28 Sep 1924, EA2:111/16/3(1); also Edwards, P.G., p.76

- 92 Scott, pp.106-109; Orde, p.70; Roskill. II, p.381; Carlton. Mac-  
donald..., p.74; Winkler, p.316; Walters, p.264
- 93 SSCols to GGNZ, 8 Apr 1925, enc. CID 559-B, 'Report of the Sub-com-  
mittee on the Geneva Protocol', 23 Jan 1925, G2:63; Roskill. II, pp.  
393-394
- 94 SSCols to GGNZ, 21 Nov 1924, EA1:111/16/5(1); LNOJ. 6th Yr. No.2.  
Feb 1925. Minutes of 32nd Council, 5th meeting, 9 Dec 1924, p.128;  
see Petrie, Sir C. The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Sir  
Austen Chamberlain. II. London: Cassel, 1940, p.253
- 95 SSCols to GGNZ, 19,19 Dec 1924, EA1:111/16/5(1); SSCols to GGNZ, 2  
Jan 1925, enc. Minutes of CID's 192nd meeting, 16 Dec 1924, G2:62;  
also Casey to Bruce, 4,16 Dec 1924, My Dear P.M., pp.2-3,7-11
- 96 GGNZ to SSCols, 9 Jan 1925, EA1:111/16/5(1)
- 97 GGNZ to SSCols, 13 Nov 1924, EA1:111/16/5(1); Bell to Massey, 3 Nov  
1924, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 98 Imp Conf 1923, 4th meeting, 8 Oct 1923, G40:4; Allen to Massey, 21  
Nov 1924, EA1:151/1/13(1A); Carter, p.120
- 99 GGNZ to SSCols, 23 Dec 1924, EA1:111/16/5(1); see Sec-Gen to PMNZ,  
11 Oct 1924; GGNZ to SSCols, 24 Dec 1924, AD1:51/866/3
- 100 Bell to Fergusson, 19 Feb 1925, G2:62; cf. Casey to Bruce, 10 Dec  
1924, My Dear P.M., pp.4-7
- 101 GGNZ to SSCols, 6 Jan, 7 Mar 1925, EA1:111/16/5(1)
- 102 SSCols to GGNZ, 5 Feb 1925, EA1:111/16/5(1); SSCols to GGNZ, 17 Feb  
1925, G2:62; SSCols to GGNZ, 19 Mar, 2 Jul 1925, G2:63; also Hudson,  
W.J., p.57; Roskill. II, p.395; Wigley, p.239; Carter, pp.121-122,  
133 n.63; Veatch, pp.56-58
- 103 SSCols to GGNZ, 8 Apr 1925, enc. CID 559-B, G2:63; also Scott, pp.  
111-112; Orde, pp.78ff; Casey to Bruce, 5 Feb 1925, My Dear P.M.,  
pp.17-23
- 104 SSCols to GGNZ, 3 Mar 1925; GGNZ to SSCols, 7,9 Mar 1925, EA1:  
111/16/5(1)
- 105 LNOJ. 6th Yr. No.4. Apr 1925. 33rd Council, 6th meeting, 12 Mar  
1925, pp.446-450
- 106 Scott, p.114
- 107 New Zealand. The Round Table. 59, Jun 1925, pp.625-627. Cf. Canada.  
Wigley, p.239

108 NZPD, 1 Jul 1925, Vol.206, pp.111-112; 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.757-758; also 1 Jul 1925, Vol.206, p.129; 3 Jul 1925, pp.187-188

109 NZPD, 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, p.755

110 Ibid, pp.747-750

111 NZPD, 4 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.69-72

112 NZPD, 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.757-760,762-766; 24 Jun 1926, Vol.209, p.132; New Zealand. The Round Table. 59, Jun 1925, pp.625-627

113 NZPD, 28 Sep 1925, Vol.208, pp.772-773

114 Imp Conf 1921, 20th meeting, 8 Jul 1921, G40:2



## CHAPTER 4

## 'AN IMPERFECT INSTRUMENT', 1925-1928

New Zealand was pleased that the British had rejected the Geneva Protocol, even though it was a serious blow to the League and raised questions about Britain's commitment to that body and the peace of Europe. But, while the New Zealand Government was unconcerned about its international image in the quest to have the Protocol killed, the British Government sought to repair the damage by negotiating an alternative and less ambitious scheme with Germany, France and Belgium during 1925.<sup>1</sup>

From the conference at Locarno, Switzerland, in October 1925, emerged the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee signed by France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Britain. The Locarno Pact, as it became known, guaranteed the inviolability of the French and Belgian frontiers with Germany. Any dispute between the parties was to be referred to the League Council. Accompanying the pact were four Arbitration Conventions which provided an elaborate system of arbitration, conciliation or resort to the Council.<sup>2</sup> If there had been anxieties in Geneva about the negotiations at Locarno, they were quickly dispelled when it was seen how closely the treaties were linked to the League.<sup>3</sup> Since the agreements would not come into force until Germany joined the League, it was hoped Germany would soon end its international isolation and take its rightful place on the League Council. Yet, the German application to enter the League sparked controversy and dissension among its members. It also

had important implications for the status of the Dominions within the League.

Germany applied for League membership on 8 February 1926, on the understanding that it would be granted a permanent seat on the Council.<sup>4</sup> By the time the special session of the Assembly convened on 8 March 1926, the future composition of the Council had become a divisive issue because Spain, Brazil and Poland were also claiming permanent seats. For a week, the Locarno Powers ignored the Assembly while they met in secret to try to resolve the problem. Only the Dominion delegates were in the privileged position of being kept fully informed of the negotiations by the Foreign Secretary.<sup>5</sup> But a satisfactory solution could not be found and the Assembly was put in the humiliating position of having to postpone the German application until September 1926 while a committee studied the question.

Austen Chamberlain had only kept the Dominion delegates informed during the Assembly because he believed the British delegate on the Council also represented the Dominions.<sup>6</sup> It had long been acknowledged that the Dominions were as entitled to seek a Council seat as any other League member but this had not prevented British delegates from claiming to speak on their behalf in the Council. On 9 December 1924, for instance, Chamberlain told the Council that he spoke "the mind not of one Government only but of five or six Governments..."<sup>7</sup> Canada, South Africa and Australia rejected this claim because it threatened their status as separate members of the League.<sup>8</sup> For them, the British delegate represented the Empire only when they wanted him to do so.<sup>9</sup>

New Zealand, however, supported the British claim because it maintained that imperial foreign policy was properly the preserve of the British Government.

The possibility that the Dominions might seek a Council seat of their own was not seriously considered before 1926.<sup>10</sup> But, annoyed by Chamberlain's attitude,<sup>11</sup> the Canadian and South African delegates suggested at one of the meetings of the Empire delegates in March 1926 that the Dominions should have their own representative on the Council. While Allen and the Australian delegate were appalled at the prospect, the British delegates were prepared to concede the possibility, even if they did not welcome it.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, until the number of Council seats increased, a Dominion seat was out of the question.

The plan to reorganise the Council proposed by the League Committee two months later eliminated this obstacle. The number of seats was increased from ten to fourteen. Only one of the new seats was permanent and it was allocated to Germany. The nine elected members were to sit for three years but three of them could be re-elected if the Assembly voted in favour with a two-thirds majority. In effect, this provision created three semi-permanent seats which were designed to satisfy the claims of Poland, Brazil and Spain. Allen opposed this concession because it undermined the object of the three-year non-eligibility rule which went some way towards ensuring all members had an equal chance of being elected to the Council. He also believed the lobbying and canvassing which always took place before the election of non-permanent members would become more intensive, to the detriment of the democratic

process.<sup>13</sup> But the New Zealand Government was uninterested and Allen's concerns were ignored.<sup>14</sup>

When the Assembly opened on 6 September 1926, the delegates quickly approved the plan to reorganise the Council and Germany was finally admitted as a member. Bell, the New Zealand First Delegate, was personally unenthusiastic about German membership because he feared that Germany would seek the return of its former colonies, which were now League mandates. As a former Minister of External Affairs, Bell was concerned lest New Zealand's control of the mandate of Western Samoa would be threatened. He wrote: "I voted 'Yes' and meant 'No' on the question of admission, but I suppose the world's peace must come before our comfort."<sup>15</sup> But the reorganisation of the Council had not been without its casualties. Spain and Brazil resigned their seats in protest at failing to secure permanent status. The extra vacancies apparently encouraged some of the Dominions seriously to consider standing for election.

Bell informed Coates on 9 September 1926 that during the meetings of the Empire delegates, he had been surprised to find that South Africa, Canada and Australia were in favour of such a move. He had warned the other Empire delegates that since it had been Viscount Cecil who had proposed the plan to increase the number of Council seats, there might be accusations that the British Empire was conspiring to obtain another representative on the Council. But this was not Bell's sole concern. Coates was told that there was a real danger of an unsympathetic Dominion representative stymieing British proposals in the Council.

He warned, somewhat prophetically:

It might be the Irishmen from the Free State who would certainly oppose everything that the British representative proposed, or it might be the representative of a Labour Government in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, and again there would be 'Buckley's' chance of any co-operation between the British representatives and the Dominion representative.

Bell wanted Coates and the Australian Prime Minister to persuade the other Empire delegates to postpone a Dominion candidature until it could be discussed at the Imperial Conference the following month.<sup>16</sup>

There is no indication that Coates acted on the request although he probably sympathised with Bell's views. In any case, it appeared to be too late for New Zealand to do much about the situation. Press reports from Geneva stated that it was almost certain that either Canada or the Irish Free State would stand for election in the expectation that once a seat was secured it would belong to the Dominions on a permanent rotational basis.<sup>17</sup> In an editorial entitled 'Swelled Heads and Great Powers', the Evening Post ridiculed the pretensions of the Dominions. It said the Dominions should not be foolish enough to believe that the compliment of League membership had actually changed their international status. Some concern was expressed about the effect on British foreign policy if a Dominion was elected to the Council, but the editorial concluded that, because it was so absurd, "the proposal to make each of the Dominions a Great Power in rotation can hardly result in anything more dangerous than an explosion of inextinguishable laughter..."<sup>18</sup>

In Geneva, the New Zealand delegation saw little humour in the situation, however, and hoped the proposed Dominion candidacy would be

nothing more than a 'kite-flying' exercise.<sup>19</sup> But the Irish Free State confirmed its intention to stand, causing a split among the Empire delegates. There was a feeling that if any Dominion was to stand it should be Canada because of its seniority. In the event, both the Irish Free State and Canada contested the election but they secured few votes.<sup>20</sup> Despite the claim that the Irish Free State would have been successful if it had obtained the full support of the Empire delegates, there is room for doubt on this point because of the novelty of the Dominion claim.<sup>21</sup>

Though the Irish were criticised for their tactics, there was no question that the League had been put on notice by the action of the Dominions.<sup>22</sup> There was now general agreement among the Empire delegates that Canada should seek a seat in 1927.<sup>23</sup> W.A. Riddell, the permanent Canadian representative at Geneva, believed that Australia and New Zealand would support the Canadian bid if they were assured that Canada would be willing to receive the views of the other Dominions before taking action on any question affecting their vital interests. He felt that because both Dominions were mandatory powers, they were beginning to realise that the composition of an enlarged Council was of importance to them.<sup>24</sup> Undoubtedly there was concern in New Zealand about German intentions in relation to the mandates but the government was still not convinced a Council seat for the Dominions was desirable. This is not to say that Dominion representation was regarded as "dangerous beyond expression" as Bell continued to assert.<sup>25</sup> It was acknowledged that the Dominions had a right to such representation and that it was probable one of the larger Dominions would seek a seat in the

future.<sup>26</sup> But Council representation was just one more unwelcome move away from the imperial unity New Zealand valued so highly.

At the 1927 Assembly, Canada's bid for the Council was successful.<sup>27</sup> According to New Zealand's First Delegate, Sir James Parr, who had replaced Allen as High Commissioner in London in August 1926, the other Dominions had backed Canada on the understanding that it would represent them all. He also believed that Australia and New Zealand would occupy Council seats in their turn.<sup>28</sup> But if the New Zealand Government was gratified that there were now two members of the Empire on the Council, there was no expectation that the Dominion would itself seek a seat in the near future. The government had not altered its view that New Zealand had neither the expertise nor the interest to follow the lead of the larger Dominions. It remained content to leave the Dominion's external affairs in the hands of Britain.

The New Zealand Free Lance was not impressed with this policy. On 21 September 1927 it declared:

As for New Zealand, we are very modest indeed. Our Government does not even venture to ask for a turn at a non-permanent seat. This humility is no doubt a very becoming attitude, and ought to win us a pat on the head from our seniors, but the sad fact is that in actual life the only reward the extremely humble person gets is so nicely termed in the colloquial tongue a kick on the pants.<sup>29</sup>

This criticism reveals that the question of Dominion representation on the Council was much less concerned with the role of the Dominions in the League, than with their status within the British Commonwealth.

The admission of Germany to the League was an important milestone

on the road to universality. But the progress towards that goal had not been smooth or without casualties during 1926. Brazil's failure to secure a permanent Council seat prompted its resignation from the League. In addition, rapprochement with the United States was set back by its decision not to adhere to the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice. On 1 September 1926, the signatories of the Statute convened a conference at Geneva to discuss the reservations attached by the United States to its application to join the Permanent Court. On the request of the British Government, Bell and Parr attended the conference of predominantly legal experts. Bell was appointed one of the two Vice-Presidents of the conference and a member of the drafting committee.

The principal stumbling-block encountered by the conference was the reservation which prevented the Permanent Court from giving an advisory opinion on any dispute or question in which the United States claimed an interest, without American agreement. Under Article 14 of the Covenant, the Council and the Assembly had the right to request an opinion on any dispute referred to them. The Council had on numerous occasions used these opinions as a guide to its decisions. The American reservation not only attacked the heart of the League's arbitral powers under the Covenant but also placed the United States in a more advantageous position than the other signatories. Not surprisingly, there was strong opposition to the reservation. To overcome the problem, Bell suggested that all signatories should adopt this power. He did not believe the reservation was sufficiently serious to stand in the way of this opportunity to involve the United States in the work of the League.

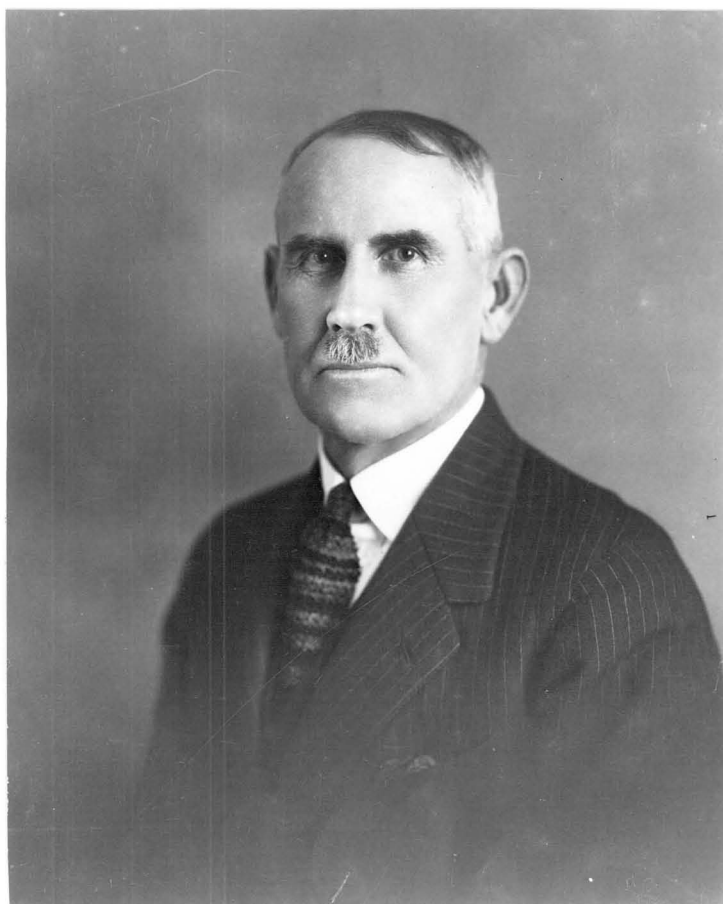


To his great regret, the conference did not explicitly accept the reservation but merely offered the assurance that the United States would have the same rights as any permanent member of the Council. Bell described the conference's reply to the United States as "a mass of meaningless words" and he refused to accept any responsibility for it. Without the explicit acceptance of the reservation, the United States refused to accede and in fact was never to do so during the life of the League. Speaking in the New Zealand Legislative Council in July 1927, Bell was unrepentant about opposing the British legal experts on the question. He believed that if the conference had given in to the United States on this point, the Permanent Court would have had the chance to become a powerful international Court of Appeal.<sup>30</sup>

Bell's active interest in the League was as exceptional as his presence at Geneva in 1926. Foreign affairs, and League affairs in particular, merited little government attention under Coates. In part, this was the result of the Prime Minister's own lack of interest in the subject. But it also reflected the stability of the international situation because Coates' term of office coincided with the most peaceful years of the inter-war period. Parliament was largely ignorant about the direction of the Dominion's foreign policy. Debates on external issues were infrequent and short; no more than half a day during most sessions. Preoccupied with domestic problems, the government tended to place any external matter on the bottom of the order paper of the House, where it invariably became a casualty of the rush to complete business at the end of the session. The consideration of some subjects by Parliament was sometimes delayed until the following year.<sup>31</sup>

The criticisms of the League which punctuated Massey's speeches on foreign affairs were not made by his successor. Thinly-veiled hostility was replaced by a detached acceptance. On 1 September 1926 Coates told the House: "This country stands ready to take every step, and to afford every encouragement, that may forward the interests of the League and the attainment of its ultimate goal, in so far as these do not impair the interests of the British Empire."<sup>32</sup> It is significant that this statement reveals little about the government's policy on the League. Labour MPs continued to press for New Zealand representation at the annual International Labour Conference but, as Coates explained to the Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond, in London in 1926, the government maintained that the expense was unwarranted.<sup>33</sup> The government's replies to the League's requests for opinions on the draft conventions, questionnaires and committee reports, which were sent regularly to the Dominion, either stated New Zealand had no comment to make or simply associated the Dominion with the replies of the British Government.<sup>34</sup>

The lower profile of the New Zealand delegation to the Assembly from 1926, was in part a reflection of the government's attitude. But the appointment of Sir Christopher James Parr as Allen's successor was also responsible for the change in emphasis of the delegation's activities. Like Allen, Parr was a former senior Cabinet minister. He was born in Cambridge in 1869. Admitted to the Bar in 1890, he practised law in Coromandel and Auckland. He was Mayor of Auckland from 1911 to 1915 and was elected MP for Eden in 1914. Parr was Minister of Education from 1920 to 1926 and held the portfolios of Health(1920-1923),



Sir James Parr

Justice and Postmaster-General(1924-1926). On Massey's death, Parr contested the leadership of the Reform Party with Coates. After serving one term as High Commissioner, he returned to New Zealand and was appointed Leader of the Legislative Council in October 1931. He was reappointed High Commissioner in January 1934, serving until August 1936.<sup>35</sup>

Although he occasionally criticised the League's continually increasing budget,<sup>36</sup> Parr mainly focussed his attention on the League's

work in the social sphere. In his report on the Ninth Assembly, Parr wrote: "In my judgement, if the League of Nations fulfilled no other task, its existence is justified because of what it does in the way of world Social Welfare."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, he once suggested that the Fourth Committee's call for economy should not prevent the League from allocating more funds to its work in this area.<sup>38</sup> Parr took an active interest in the two League agencies whose establishment Allen had strenuously opposed. On the Health Organisation Parr said: "This branch of the League's work not only commands respect and confidence, but can be accepted without reserve, for it is so catholic in scope that every State benefits in one or another direction."<sup>39</sup>

The work of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation received similar praise from Parr.<sup>40</sup> He believed that one of the League's most important roles must be to educate the people of the world, the young in particular, about its aims and ideals, in an effort to increase the prospects for peace. In the Sixth Committee of the Ninth Assembly, Parr claimed that the slow progress of the disarmament discussions was attributable to the lack of the right moral attitude. He said moral disarmament must come first and that its promotion was the duty of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation.<sup>41</sup>

The areas which Parr involved himself, such as intellectual co-operation, film censorship<sup>42</sup> and drug control, were not as contentious as those in which Allen had been active as League delegate. This partially explains why New Zealand was less prominent in the committees. But it also seems clear that Parr's style was less confrontational than Allen's and that he was more inclined to follow the lead of the British delega-

tion.<sup>43</sup>

Although Parr had been loudly critical of the League before his appointment as High Commissioner, he slowly came to respect its achievements. While he stated in 1927 that too much must not be expected of what was still an "imperfect instrument",<sup>44</sup> by the end of his first term in 1929 he was urging the government to take the League more seriously.<sup>45</sup> But Parr proved no more successful in convincing Wellington of the League's usefulness than Allen had been.

The New Zealand Government may not have been interested in much of the League's work but the continuing prominence of the disarmament issue meant it could not ignore the League altogether. The failure of the Geneva Protocol had not weakened the resolve of many of the delegations that the League's primary goal should be general disarmament. In fact, even as the Locarno conference was about to convene, the Sixth Assembly was trying to repair the damage done to the League's prestige by the collapse of the Protocol initiative. The forthcoming conference deprived the Assembly of the opportunity to make a fresh attempt at the whole question of international security, but it was understood that disarmament was not on the agenda at Locarno.<sup>46</sup> In a resolution which Allen described as no more than a face-saving gesture, the Assembly invited the Council to undertake preparatory studies with a view to summoning a disarmament conference at some future date.<sup>47</sup> In December 1925, the Council established the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, which included League members, the United States and later the Soviet Union, to report on the complex technical aspects of the ques-

tion. But disarmament has always been a political problem rather than a technical one. The Council's brief to the Preparatory Commission was a diversionary tactic to obscure the fact that the Great Powers did not possess the political will to tackle the problem of arms control.<sup>48</sup>

The painfully slow progress of the Commission during 1926 and 1927 clearly showed the reluctance of the powers to address the issue.<sup>49</sup> Despite the hope of the Seventh Assembly that the conference might be held in 1927, the Commission's report in November 1926 served only to confirm that serious obstacles still lay in the path towards this objective. The New Zealand press was not unduly concerned about the lack of progress. The Otago Daily Times said that in order for the work to be done properly there should not be undue haste. The New Zealand Herald dismissed the League's previous efforts towards disarmament as fruitless idealism and it applauded the realism of the current approach.<sup>50</sup>

The New Zealand Government continued to be unreceptive to any disarmament initiatives. In November 1925, it declined an invitation from the British Government to be represented on the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence which was to consider the proposed disarmament conference.<sup>51</sup> Although the Dominion Government implicitly acknowledged that disarmament was primarily the concern of the British Government, there was a strong belief that Britain had already done more to limit its armaments than any other major power.<sup>52</sup> Allen told Coates in April 1926 that in the event of a disarmament conference, New Zealand should oppose any further weakening of the Royal Navy.<sup>53</sup>

Coates was keen for the Dominion to make a greater contribution to imperial defence. On 23 April 1927, he announced that New Zealand would contribute £1 million, in seven or eight annual instalments, towards the cost of building the Singapore Naval Base.<sup>54</sup> In Parliament in September 1927, Coates justified the government's decision with the same argument Massey had used seven years before. He said that

no one could say that the League of Nations is an effective protection against aggression or against interference with trade, or, indeed, with peoples, and it is essential in our own interests that we should do our share towards protecting our trade routes and assisting Empire defence.<sup>55</sup>

In reply, Opposition leader Harry Holland said the proposal was essentially a war gesture aimed at Japan, and that the salvation of the world lay not in arms races but in international agreements.<sup>56</sup> Labour MP E.J. Howard noted that New Zealand could not expect the rest of the world to support the cause of peace if it was not prepared to do so at home.<sup>57</sup>

The New Zealand Government's attitude was symptomatic of the difficulties the League was facing in its efforts to achieve a secure peace. With the Preparatory Commission making little progress, it was suggested at the 1927 Assembly that the Geneva Protocol should be revived. The British Empire countries had not changed their views on the Protocol and opposed the proposal.<sup>58</sup> The 1926 Imperial Conference had reaffirmed the decision not to accept compulsory arbitration, and the question of the Optional Clause continued to prejudice Britain and the Dominions against the Protocol.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, the Assembly was still anxious to improve the security the League offered its members by strengthening the powers of the

Covenant. In the Third Committee it was proposed that the Council could request member-states to furnish details of the measures they would be prepared to take if the League intervened in a dispute. Parr and the other Dominion representatives made it clear that their countries would not commit themselves to guarantee European frontiers or send military forces to support the Council's decision in a European conflict. Parr said such guarantees should be of a regional character only and he supported Chamberlain's statement that Britain would not extend its guarantees beyond those agreed to at Locarno. In the face of this opposition, the Committee agreed to amend the proposal so that the Council could only make a general enquiry to which member-states could reply as they saw fit.<sup>60</sup>

Editorial opinion in New Zealand solidly backed the British stand. Most newspapers believed Britain had amply demonstrated its commitment to the League and disarmament. Until other states responded to the British lead, Britain's reluctance to undertake any further arms reduction or security guarantees was justified.<sup>61</sup> Yet Parr sounded a cautionary note. He told Coates that the British attitude towards disarmament was considered distinctly unhelpful at Geneva, and he noted, with concern, that there were calls from British pacifists and 'small navy' people in the Liberal and Labour Parties for Britain to make some gesture to show it was in earnest about disarmament.<sup>62</sup>

The Eighth Assembly's preoccupation with the effectiveness of the Covenant was given concrete form by the creation of the Arbitration and Security Committee. A parallel body to the Preparatory Commission, the



Committee's task was to make disarmament feasible by offering better guarantees of security. Instead of amending the Covenant itself, the Committee produced conventions which sought to make some of the Covenant's Articles more explicit. It was anticipated that these conventions would act as models for future international treaties.<sup>63</sup>

Reporting on these developments, Parr said the desire to strengthen the Covenant was understandable. Nonetheless, he believed the Assembly's concern was premature because the Covenant had not been fully utilised in any dispute brought before the League.<sup>64</sup> "The signatures to the Peace Treaty were hardly dry," he told Coates, "before some nations expressed a desire to amend those Articles of the Covenant designed to prevent war, with a view of making them not only more precise, but of strengthening several clauses of them. Will the Covenant work? Well, it has to be tried."<sup>65</sup>

Among the various proposals which the Assembly considered on the security question in 1927 was a Polish resolution which stated that war should be renounced as an instrument of national policy, and that the settlement of disputes should never be sought except by peaceful means. The same ideas were embodied in the Treaty for the Renunciation of War, also known as the Pact of Paris or Kellogg-Briand Pact, proposed by the United States in April 1928.<sup>66</sup> There was concern in Britain and New Zealand that the pact might conflict with the League Covenant and the Locarno treaties.<sup>67</sup> The New Zealand press thought it would have been better for the United States to support the League rather than proposing yet another international treaty.<sup>68</sup> But governments all over the world

were persuaded by the prospect of greater American involvement in the quest for peace,<sup>69</sup> and by growing public anti-militarist feeling, to sign the pact in Paris on 27 August 1928.

On the same day, the Governor-General, Coates, and other ministers participated in a large public meeting at the Wellington Town Hall to express the Dominion's support for the pact.<sup>70</sup> The fact that its supporters included a wide cross-section of New Zealanders reveals that the Dominion was not immune to the peace sentiment which was becoming increasingly strong in Europe and the United States.<sup>71</sup> In New Zealand, this revulsion against war was fueled by a spate of anti-war novels, plays, poetry and memoirs, mostly by former combatants who used stark and realistic language to detail the horrors of war. Ernest Hemingway, Edmund Blunden and Siegfried Sassoon all refuted the image of patriotic glory which still surrounded the Dominion's participation in the First World War. Among the most influential were R.C. Sherriff's Journey's End and Erich Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front. The film version of the latter was shown to packed houses in cinemas in 1931.<sup>72</sup>

In Parliament, those members who had been consistently opposed to the League welcomed the American "gesture of peace".<sup>73</sup> Even Allen, the principal defender of the League in the Legislative Council, believed the moral sanction against aggression embodied in the Pact of Paris was a better guarantee against war than the economic and military sanctions provided by the Covenant.<sup>74</sup> At the Labour Party conference in April 1928, the delegates strongly reaffirmed their opposition to militarism and the Party's election platform included a statement of its full

support for the League and the outlawry of war.<sup>75</sup> The peace groups also found their message was gaining wider acceptance. The LNU's popularity had suffered because of the vigorous disarmament campaign it began in 1925. By October 1927, however, it noted that the prospects for the organisation had improved greatly.<sup>76</sup> Because of this increasing public interest in the questions of peace and disarmament, the Reform Party's 1928 election manifesto expressed support for the League for the first time.<sup>77</sup>

But if there was hope that the government would be more sympathetic to the League's own security initiatives, that hope was to be unfulfilled. From 1929 New Zealand mounted a determined campaign to scupper the plans of the newly re-elected British Labour Government to align the foreign and defence policies of the Empire more closely with the objectives of the League. The differences between New Zealand and Britain over their interpretations of the Empire's obligations under the Covenant became so serious that they threatened to split the Empire apart.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Scott, pp.113-125; Orde, Chapters 4 & 5
- 2 Walters, pp.291-292
- 3 Ibid, pp.289-290; Scott, p.124; Cecil, pp.167-169; Allen to Coates, 24 Oct 1925, EA1:151/1/13(1A); NZPD, 28 Jun 1927, Vol.212, p.30
- 4 On the admission of Germany to the League see Barros, J. Office Without Power: Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond 1919-1933. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, Chapter 4; Scott, pp.136-143,150-158; Walters, Chapter 27. See SSDA to GGNZ, 26 Feb, 3,4,6,8 Mar 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1); Allen to Coates, 2 Mar 1926, EA1:151/1/13(1A); Casey to Bruce, 11 Feb 1926, My Dear P.M., pp.133-138; The Leo Amery Diaries. I. Barnes, J. & Nicholson, D.(eds) London: Hutchinson, 1980, pp.443-444
- 5 SSDA to GGNZ, 15,18 Mar 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
- 6 SSDA to GGNZ, 18 Mar 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1); The Leo Amery Diaries. I, p.446
- 7 Veatch, pp.66-67; Wigley, p.234
- 8 See Petrie. II, p.251; Wigley, pp.113-114; Carter, p.13; Memo by L.C. Christie(Legal Adviser, Ext.Affairs,Canada), 9 Feb 1920; N.W. Rowell (Canadian Delegate to Assembly)to Milner, 24 Dec 1920, DCER. III, pp.395-396,427-428
- 9 The Leo Amery Diaries. I, p.443
- 10 King to Riddell, 6 Mar 1926, DCER. IV, p.600
- 11 Memo by Skelton, 21 Jan 1925, DCER. III, pp.430-432; also Senator R. Dandurand(Canadian 1st Delegate to Assembly) to Skelton, 26 Jun 1926, DCER. IV, pp.610-611; Wigley, p.235
- 12 Dandurand to Skelton, 26 Jun 1926, DCER. IV, pp.610-611; Casey to Bruce, 25 Mar 1926, My Dear P.M., pp.152-157
- 13 Allen to Coates, 18 May 1926, EA1:151/1/13(1A)
- 14 Gray to W. Nosworthy(Min.Ext.Affairs), 15 Jun 1926; F.D. Thomson to Gray, 19 Jun 1926; Berendsen to Thomson, 29 Jun 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
- 15 Stewart, p.256
- 16 Bell to Coates, 9 Sep 1926, quoted in Stewart, pp.257-259; see Hillmer, N. The Foreign Office, the Dominions and the Diplomatic Unity

- of the Empire, 1925-29. In Dilks, D.(ed) Retreat From Power: Studies in British Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century. I. London: Macmillan, 1981, p.68
- 17 Dominion, 16 Sep 1926; NZ Herald, 16 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1); see LNOJ. SS44. 11th Assembly. 9th Plenary meeting, 14 Sep 1926, pp.72-73
  - 18 Evening Post, 10 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 19 Dominion, 16 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 20 Dominion, 17 Sep 1926; Evening Post, 17 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 21 Evening Post, 18 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(2); NZPD, 8 Jul 1927, Vol.212, p.414
  - 22 NZ Herald, 17 Sep 1926; Nelson Evening Mail, 20 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(2); Taranaki Herald, 23 Sep 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 23 Manawatu Evening Standard, 4 Oct 1926; Evening Post, 9 Nov 1926, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 24 Riddell to Skelton, 25 Sep 1926, DCER. IV, pp.616-617
  - 25 NZPD, 8 Jul 1927, Vol.212, p.415
  - 26 Ibid, p.421
  - 27 Neatby. II, pp.194-195; Veatch, p.18; Skelton to King, 17 Sep 1927, DCER. IV, pp.624-628
  - 28 Evening Post, 27 Sep 1927, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 29 NZ Free Lance, 21 Sep 1927, EA2:114/4/5(1)
  - 30 Stewart, pp.253-254; NZPD, 8 Jul 1927, Vol.212, pp.412-414; 15 Oct 1931, Vol.230, p.294; Walters, pp.351-354; Hudson, M.O., pp.211-216
  - 31 NZPD, 3 Dec 1927, Vol.216, pp.789ff; cf. Canada. Veatch, pp.28-40
  - 32 NZPD, 1 Sep 1926, Vol.211, p.131; see Imp Conf 1926, 8th meeting, 25 Oct 1926, G40:4
  - 33 NZPD, 3 Aug 1927, Vol.213, pp.195-196; 24 Aug 1928, Vol.217, pp.522-523; 24 Jun 1926, Vol.209, pp.124,131, 138-140,152-153. See Stewart to Coates, 24 May 1927, EA2:112/1/1(1A)
  - 34 Coates to F.J. Rolleston(Attorney-General), 30 Jul 1927, EA1:106/5/2(1); LNOJ. 8th Yr. No.10. Oct 1927. 46th Council, Annex 987a, p.1190; NZPD, 8 Aug 1928, Vol.218, pp.25-26; 9 Aug 1928, p.76
  - 35 Who's Who in New Zealand.... 4th ed, p.274

- 36 NZ Delegate's Report on 9th Assembly, Jan 1929, p.45, EA2:114/3/2(3)
- 37 Ibid, p.48
- 38 LNOJ. SS69. 9th Assembly. 5th Cmte, 8th meeting, 17 Sep 1928, p.45
- 39 Report on 9th Assembly, p.16, EA2:114/3/2(3)
- 40 Ibid, pp.56-57
- 41 LNOJ. SS70. 9th Assembly. 6th Cmte, 4th meeting, 13 Sep 1928, p.14
- 42 Report on 9th Assembly, pp.48-49,60, EA2:114/3/2(3)
- 43 Ibid, p.54
- 44 NZ Delegate's Report on 8th Assembly, 30 Sep 1927, p.25, EA2:114/3/2(3)
- 45 Parr to Ward, 11 Jan 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 46 Zimmern, pp.368-369
- 47 Report on 6th Assembly, pp.28,65-66, EA2:114/3/2(2)
- 48 Scott, pp.189-190
- 49 Walters, pp.361ff
- 50 Otago Daily Times, 28 Sep 1926; NZ Herald, 24 Jul 1926, EA1:111/12/9(1)
- 51 SSDA to GGNZ, 14 Dec 1925, enc. CID 649-B, 'Report of the Sub-committee on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments', 27 Nov 1925, G2:64
- 52 Casey to Bruce, 17 Dec 1925, My Dear P.M., pp.116-118; Hudson, W.J., p.105
- 53 Allen to Coates, 8 Apr 1926, EA1:153/14/2(1)
- 54 Singapore and Naval Defence. Statement by PM. 23 Apr 1927, AJHR. 1927, A-7; McGibbon, Chapter 8
- 55 NZPD, 21 Sep 1927, Vol.214, pp.258-259
- 56 Ibid, pp.260-265; see Taranaki Daily News, 23 Sep 1927, EA1:455/7/1(2)
- 57 NZPD, 21 Sep 1927, Vol.214, p.281; see Press, 2 May 1927
- 58 Parr to OSC, 7 Sep 1927; Coates to Parr, 8 Sep 1927, EA1:111/16/5(1); Parr to PMO, 8 Sep 1927, EA1:311/3/7(3); Report on 8th Assembly, pp.7-8,10-13, EA2:114/3/2(3)

- 59 Imp Conf 1926, Inter-Imperial Relations Cmte, 9th meeting, 9 Nov 1926, G40:5; Parr to OSC, 19 Sep 1927, EA1:111/16/5(1); Berendsen to Stewart, 2 Nov 1927, EA2:106/2/7(1); SSDA to GGNZ, 26 Nov 1927, EA1:111/17/1(1). See Christchurch Sun, 3 Jul 1928, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 60 LNOJ. SS57. 8th Assembly. 3rd Cmte, 8th meeting, 21 Sep 1927, p.55; 10th meeting, 23 Sep 1927, p.67; 11th meeting, 23 Sep 1927, p.69; Annex 4; also Report on 8th Assembly, pp.42-43, EA2:114/3/2(3); W.C. Bridgeman(1st Lord Admiralty) to Coates, 28 Sep 1927, EA1:455/7/1(2)
- 61 Nelson Evening Mail, 16 Sep 1927; NZ Herald, 26 Nov 1927; Auckland Sun, 28 Nov 1927; Evening Post, 20 Jan 1928; Otago Daily Times, 21 Jan 1928, EA1:111/12/9(1)
- 62 Parr to OSC, 25 Nov 1927; Parr to Coates, 12 Dec 1927, EA1:455/7/1(2)
- 63 Walters, pp.369,381-382
- 64 Report on 8th Assembly, pp.41-42, EA2:114/3/2(3)
- 65 Ibid, p.8
- 66 On the Pact of Paris see Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1928. London: Oxford University Press, 1929, pp.10-36; Documents on International Affairs, 1928. Wheeler-Bennett, J.W.(ed) London: Oxford University Press, 1929, p.1; Scott, pp.200-203; Zimmern, pp.382ff; Walters, pp.384-387
- 67 SSDA to GGNZ, 6,10 May 1928, EA2:111/6/1(1); The Leo Amery Diaries. I, pp.543-548
- 68 Evening Post, 9 Jan 1928; Dominion, 3 Jan 1928; NZ Herald, 6 Jan 1928; Auckland Star, 6 Jan 1928; Dunedin Star, 16 Apr 1928; Otago Daily Times, 17 Apr 1928; Auckland Weekly News, 19 Apr 1928, PM24:5/1
- 69 Parr to Coates, 5 Sep 1928, EA1:111/6/7(1); cf. Canadian view. Neatby. II, p.264
- 70 Dominion, 28 Aug 1928, EA1:111/6/9(1)
- 71 Egerton, G.W. Great Britain and the League of Nations: Collective Security as Myth and History. In The League of Nations in Retrospect: Proceedings of the Symposium. Geneva, 6-9 Nov 1980. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983, p.101
- 72 Sharpe, M. Anzac Day in New Zealand 1916-1939. New Zealand Journal of History. 15.2, Oct 1981, pp.106,110; Grant, p.24
- 73 NZPD, 4 Jul 1928, Vol.217, pp.113-115,122; 5 Jul 1928, p.138; 6 Jul 1928, pp.210-211,251
- 74 Ibid, 6 Jul 1928, p.205

- 75 NZ Labour Party 12th Annual Conference, Wellington, 9 Apr 1928, Labour Party Papers 270:350; NZ Labour Party 13th Annual Conference, Wellington, 1 Apr 1929, Labour Party Papers 270:351; see NZPD, 2 Aug 1928, Vol.217, p.1023
- 76 Grant, pp.23-24; Evening Post, 25 Oct 1927, EA2:112/1/1(1A)
- 77 Speech by Coates, Dargaville, 16 May 1927, Coates Papers 1785:116; Brown, p.99



## CHAPTER 5

NEW ZEALAND BATTLES WITH  
THE SECOND BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT,  
1929-1931

Wellington greeted the Labour Party's return to power in Britain in June 1929 without enthusiasm. The New Zealand Government had every reason to believe the Dominion's relations with the second MacDonald administration would be as strained as with the first. New Zealand too had a new government. The United Party, a coalescence of the remnants of the Liberal Party and the Nationalists, had taken office in November 1928 under the leadership of Sir Joseph Ward. Within a year, however, Ward's health had begun to fail and effective power passed to George Forbes, who became Prime Minister on 28 May 1930.

George William Forbes was born in Lyttelton in 1869. Upon leaving school, he worked for his father's firm of ironmongers, ship's chandlers and hardware merchants. In 1893 he bought a farm at Cheviot and subsequently became involved in local body politics. Defeated in his first bid for the Hurunui seat in 1902, Forbes was elected as the electorate's Liberal MP in 1908. Liberal Party Whip from 1912 to 1925, he became leader of the Nationalists in 1925 and deputy-leader of the United Party in 1928. In the United Government, Forbes was Minister of Lands and Agriculture and de facto head of the Cabinet from October 1929 to May 1930. A man of apparently "bovine mediocrity", lacking ideas or initia-

tive, his only qualification for Prime Ministerial office was longevity. Genial, conciliatory and straight-forward, Forbes was a supervisor rather than a leader.<sup>1</sup> His views on the role of the Commonwealth in international affairs closely resembled those of Massey. It was the very narrowness of these views which made him such a formidable adversary to the British Labour Government's foreign policy.

Led by Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson, the new British Government pursued a vigorously pro-League foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> There was still great optimism in 1929 that the League could preserve peace through a system of general arbitration and security agreements linked to the Covenant. Largely because of the strong British backing for the Optional Clause of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, the General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War and the Convention on Financial Assistance, the League enjoyed a brief heyday when it seemed possible that these initiatives would actually come into force. But the New Zealand Government viewed these developments with suspicion.

The Dominion had never placed much faith in the League's capacity to prevent war. That Bolivia and Paraguay went to war over the Chaco region in 1928, despite the Covenant and the Pact of Paris, seemed only to confirm New Zealand's doubts.<sup>3</sup> The Dominion Government certainly did not share the British Government's conviction that the Pact of Paris heralded a new era in international relations. Carl Berendsen, the Imperial Affairs Officer, believed the world was still in a dangerous

state of turmoil. He declared that

the most conspicuous feature of international relations even today is still as ever DISTRUST, JEALOUSY AND INTRIGUE. This is of course particularly so in Europe, and the new world takes too little account of it. If war is to be averted in the future more than goodwill is required (though there is at present little enough evidence of that) - a considerable degree of good fortune will also be necessary. Naked self-interest still remains to an important extent the guiding principle of international affairs.<sup>4</sup>

Sceptical of the value of the League instruments which Britain was anxious to sign,<sup>5</sup> and convinced that the unity and security of the Empire was at stake, the New Zealand Government frequently found itself at odds with the British Government between 1929 and 1931.

The British Government moved quickly to fulfil its pledge to sign the Optional Clause. On 22 June 1929, the Dominions were told that Britain was considering the reservations which should be attached to its acceptance of the Clause.<sup>6</sup> The other Dominions were in favour of signing the Optional Clause but New Zealand wanted to postpone any decisions until the Imperial Conference met the following year.<sup>7</sup> British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald replied on 1 August 1929 that this was out of the question for he hoped to announce Britain's adherence at the forthcoming Assembly.

He proposed that the Clause should be accepted for a term of fifteen years with the reservation that the proceedings of the Permanent Court should be suspended in respect of any dispute which was being considered by the League Council. MacDonald did not believe a more explicit reservation was needed because he was confident that all League members would fulfil their obligations, and that Britain would not be in-

volved in a war in the future except in self-defence or in pursuance of its obligations under the Covenant. He also stated that reservations on domestic matters and inter-imperial disputes were unnecessary because the British Government did not consider they were affected by the Clause under international law.<sup>8</sup>

In a long memorandum, Berendsen expressed his unhappiness with the British handling of an issue he regarded as being of "far too vital importance to be disposed of in any hasty or ill-considered manner." He resented MacDonald's efforts to "stampede" the Dominions into a decision and he speculated, with some justification, that Britain might be prepared to sign the Optional Clause without Dominion agreement.<sup>9</sup> Berendsen complained that the Clause was only the latest example of the inadequate or non-existent consultation by the MacDonald administration on vital imperial issues. He urged Ward to join with Australian Prime Minister Stanley Bruce to protest against this unacceptable situation.

Berendsen's views on MacDonald's proposal on the Optional Clause were no more positive. He did not believe the reservation would adequately cover the question of belligerent rights at sea, although he conceded this was no longer such an important question because of the decline of British seapower. Berendsen did not share MacDonald's confidence in a court dominated by European land-based powers acting under an international legal system which was still in its infancy. He argued that because the definition of self-defence was unclear, Britain could not be sure its actions would always secure the approval of the League.

He noted in particular that the British military presence along the Suez Canal could be a source of difficulty. If Egypt was ever admitted to the League, it might request the Permanent Court to rule on the legality of the rights Britain still claimed there. Australia shared this concern and Bruce had already demanded that the Egyptian question be specifically reserved.<sup>10</sup> Berendsen argued that the failure to cordon off League jurisdiction from sensitive military areas would be a tacit admission that 'Empire defence' no longer existed. He believed there was also a danger that states which were not members of the League or the Permanent Court would be affected by actions Britain might take in self-defence or in the name of the League. In that case the arbitration provisions of the Optional Clause would not apply. In addition, he did not agree that it was unnecessary to reserve inter-imperial disputes and he thought it inadvisable for Britain to commit itself to the Clause for more than five years.<sup>11</sup>

These concerns were outlined in New Zealand's reply to London on 10 August 1929. Ward repeated his request that no action should be taken until the matter was properly discussed. He also made it clear that New Zealand considered the Dominions had been inadequately consulted by the British Government.<sup>12</sup> New Zealand then sought the support of the other Dominions.<sup>13</sup> Australia shared New Zealand's concerns but Bruce was prepared to sign the Optional Clause at the Assembly, holding the question of reservations and ratification over until later.<sup>14</sup> Encouraged by the Australian attitude, the New Zealand Government advised London on 21 August 1929 that the Dominion would not sign the Clause under the British formula at the forthcoming Assembly.<sup>15</sup>

Anxious to maintain Commonwealth unity on the issue, MacDonald was prepared to accept the Australian proposal.<sup>16</sup> But Henderson and Viscount Cecil protested against allowing the Dominions to veto British policy. Having been persuaded to change his mind, MacDonald told the Australian and New Zealand Governments that Britain wanted to sign at the Assembly to gain the maximum political effect in order to provide a new impetus for disarmament negotiations. He dismissed their objections by stating that his government was prepared to take certain risks for the sake of peace. There was a hint, however, that Britain might be willing to compromise on the reservations question to obtain a joint Commonwealth signing.<sup>17</sup>

While the Australian and New Zealand objections to the British proposals were the most comprehensive, the other Dominions were doubtful about some aspects also. The Irish Free State and South Africa were unhappy that inter-imperial disputes might be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Permanent Court because this implied the Dominions were less than independent states. Canada was concerned about the issue of maritime belligerent rights and the fifteen-year period of acceptance.<sup>18</sup> Faced with the problem of reconciling its commitment to signing the Optional Clause with its strong desire for Commonwealth unity, the British Government was keen to secure some sort of agreement at the meeting of Dominion representatives and British ministers arranged by the Dominions Secretary, Lord Passfield, on 27 August 1929.<sup>19</sup>

There seemed little hope of overcoming Dominion intransigence. Canada refused to attend and the representatives of the other Dominions

merely repeated their governments' positions. Nevertheless, under considerable British pressure, they agreed to a proposal for their governments which envisaged a joint Commonwealth signing at the Assembly, accompanied by a declaration that there might be further reservations before ratification. Parr was not pleased with the arrangement because, as he pointed out, once the deed was done there seemed little point in discussing it afterwards. But the British had not given up hope that further negotiations might overcome the Dominion objections.<sup>20</sup> Parr told Ward that it was clear that MacDonald's primary purpose was to improve Britain's image in Europe. He was not convinced, however, that MacDonald would receive much of a return on his investment. Australia and New Zealand had taken a strong stand at the meeting but Parr warned Ward that he should work closely with Bruce to ensure the two Dominions did not precipitate a split in the Commonwealth at Geneva.<sup>21</sup>

The results of the London meeting were not well-received in Wellington. In a draft cable for Bruce dated 30 August 1929, Ward noted that British acceptance of the Optional Clause would be equivalent to acceptance by all the Commonwealth governments and that the abstention of Australia and New Zealand would not negate this. But if they signed their position might be "irremediably compromised" and ratification would be inevitable. New Zealand's greatest objection centred on the insufficient time given by Britain for consideration of the question, not on the Clause itself. Ward warned that New Zealand might consider it necessary to make its position public in order to protect the Dominion's interests.<sup>22</sup> It had previously been unthinkable that a New Zealand government would publicly question the handling of imperial

foreign policy but Ward was suggesting that he was prepared to do so in this instance.

But before Ward could send his cable, Bruce accepted the British compromise formula.<sup>23</sup> New Zealand's position was now untenable and the government accepted the formula also on 31 August 1929. Even so, the British Government was left in no doubt that New Zealand disapproved of the manner in which the matter had been handled and that it was only the Dominion's unwillingness to endanger Commonwealth unity which prevented it from continuing to oppose the Clause. New Zealand and Australia still insisted, however, that inter-imperial disputes must be reserved and the period of acceptance be reduced to five years before they would ratify the Clause.<sup>24</sup>

When the Assembly opened on 2 September 1929 the Commonwealth delegates were already discussing the form of the announcement MacDonald would make the next day.<sup>25</sup> It was decided that he would announce the British acceptance of the Optional Clause and that a declaration was being formulated to enable its signature during the Assembly. He would also state that the Dominions would follow the same course.<sup>26</sup> The New Zealand Government was dismayed to learn that the Dominions were expected to commit themselves to signing the Clause without even knowing the form of the declaration.<sup>27</sup> Parr persuaded MacDonald to change the wording of his speech so that instead of stating the Dominions would definitely sign the Clause during the Assembly he would merely express the hope that they would do so.<sup>28</sup>



MacDonald's announcement on the Optional Clause formed part of a wide-ranging speech on disarmament and peace.<sup>29</sup> Parr praised the speech as "the most weighty and important which has been made at the Assembly in recent years by a British Delegate", but he also thought it lacked practicability.<sup>30</sup> Within a few days of the British announcement, all the Dominions except New Zealand had signalled their intention to sign the Clause.<sup>31</sup> It was not until the final reservations were agreed upon that the government relieved Parr from this "invidious" position.<sup>32</sup> These reservations were that inter-imperial disputes, domestic affairs, and disputes where the parties agreed to some other method of peaceful settlement, were to be excluded, and the Permanent Court was to suspend proceedings on a dispute for twelve months if it was before the Council. The term of the Clause was for ten years.<sup>33</sup>

New Zealand signed the Optional Clause on 19 September 1929, along with Britain, South Africa and India.<sup>34</sup> Parr was understandably relieved that the issue had been resolved. He noted that his signature immediately after that of Henderson favourably impressed the British ministers. He was convinced New Zealand's forthright attitude had contributed to a satisfactory outcome without damaging its relationship with Britain.<sup>35</sup>

The reaction in New Zealand to the acceptance of the Optional Clause was mainly favourable. The press agreed on the necessity for reservations but believed they did not detract from the value of the Commonwealth's adhesion.<sup>36</sup> The Labour Party and the LNU had strongly supported the Clause but they were concerned about the secrecy which

surrounded the negotiations.<sup>37</sup> The government's refusal to explain New Zealand's attitude was undoubtedly because it did not wish to reveal the seriousness of the Dominion's difference of opinion with Britain. New Zealand had condemned the other Dominions' public demonstrations of their independence at the cost of imperial unity. Outwardly at least, the Dominion Government liked to maintain an image of unwavering devotion to the Commonwealth and the foreign policy of the British Government.

It was this concern with unity and the status of the Dominions which largely determined New Zealand's attitude on which Dominion was to take Canada's place on the Council in 1930. On 3 September 1929, Parr told Wellington that, during a meeting of the Commonwealth delegates at Geneva, Australia had declared its intention to seek the seat. Parr supported the Australian candidature because it was the most senior Dominion after Canada. He noted that the Irish had also staked a claim but he hoped they would withdraw on the understanding that the Irish Free State would succeed Australia in 1933.<sup>38</sup> The Dominion seat on the Council had become a source of pride and an important symbol of the Dominions' status as full members of the international community. If they were to retain the seat, it was imperative that the Dominions united behind a single candidate.

With this object in mind, the Dominion delegates met informally three weeks later. Parr was dismayed to find that the Irish Free State was unwilling to withdraw in favour of Australia. The Irish said they did not like the idea of one Dominion seeming to represent the others.

They believed that their standing as an independent nation would attract wide support. Parr was quick to remind the other delegates of the 1926 debacle. "The sight of two of our own people fighting each other would be...a pleasant spectacle for the other Powers, who would seize the opportunity to cut in between us and take the vacant seat with a candidate of their own," he said. Pointing out that the group nomination system for the Council seats had complete control in the Assembly, Parr believed the Dominions had as much right as the South Americans or the Little Entente to use that system to secure a seat for themselves. The Irish still refused to withdraw, however, and the meeting ended in stalemate.<sup>39</sup>

The situation changed in March 1930 with Australia's decision not to contest the Council election.<sup>40</sup> On 24 March 1930, the Irish Free State asked the other Dominions to support its candidacy.<sup>41</sup> The New Zealand Government was favourably inclined but Parr's successor as High Commissioner, Thomas Wilford, questioned the suitability of the Irish as the Dominions' representative. Reminding Forbes that the Irish Free State had not endorsed the Commonwealth's reservations on the Optional Clause, he suggested New Zealand should not commit itself definitely to supporting the Irish.<sup>42</sup> Australian Prime Minister J.H. Scullin shared Wilford's doubts. He wanted the views of the other Dominions before he was prepared to back the Irish Free State.<sup>43</sup> Forbes stated that one of the Dominions must contest the seat. Since neither Australia nor South Africa were interested, New Zealand would support the Irish Free State.<sup>44</sup> Despite Wilford's reservations, New Zealand joined the other Dominions in backing the Irish candidacy in April 1930.<sup>45</sup>



Sir Thomas Wilford

Thomas Mason Wilford became New Zealand High Commissioner in London in January 1930. He was born in Wellington in 1870 and was admitted to the Bar in 1891. Elected as the Liberal member for Wellington Suburbs in 1896, Wilford represented Hutt as a Liberal, a Nationalist and then a United MP from 1903 until 1930. He served as Mayor of Wellington from 1910 to 1911. Minister of Justice and Marine in the National Government between 1917 and 1919, Wilford succeeded Ward as Liberal leader in 1919. Leader of the Opposition until he was forced to resign for health reasons in 1925, he joined the United Government as Minister of Justice and

Defence in 1928. Wilford was a man of wit and intellect who was more inclined to compromise than "nail his colours to the mast".<sup>46</sup> As New Zealand's delegate to the Assembly, he never displayed the same sympathy for the League as his predecessors.

It is probable the Dominions assumed that Britain would put its considerable influence behind their Council bid as it had done in 1927. It came as a shock when in June 1930 Lord Passfield informed them that Britain would prefer either China or one of the smaller European states to take Canada's place. He argued that a permanent Dominion seat would face considerable opposition at Geneva which would probably result in the defeat of the Dominion candidature. He suggested there should be further discussion among the Commonwealth delegates to the Assembly before a final decision to seek the seat was made.<sup>47</sup>

Outraged by the implication that the Dominions were merely British satellites, the Irish Free State declared it would contest the election as an independent member of the League.<sup>48</sup> Forbes told London that New Zealand was committed to supporting the Irish and he believed the Dominions had a much greater claim to British backing than China or any other state.<sup>49</sup> Wilford was instructed to support the Irish Free State in the Council elections at the Eleventh Assembly.<sup>50</sup>

The election of the Irish Free State in 1930 established the right of the Dominions to occupy a Council seat on a permanent rotational basis. Yet it had also shown that seniority alone did not determine which Dominion would stand. Certainly there was no suggestion that New

Zealand would seek a seat in the foreseeable future.<sup>51</sup> The government would have concurred with the Canadian view that Canada should serve a second time before New Zealand had served once.<sup>52</sup> Parr noted in 1929: "It is, of course, impossible for a small country like New Zealand to aspire to a seat on the Council. The inconvenience and expense of keeping a New Zealand delegate in Europe all the time would be beyond our strength." Nonetheless, he thought the position might be different if the government could be persuaded that the Dominion's representation at Geneva was important and deserved greater resources.<sup>53</sup>

The British Government was determined to build on the progress made by the acceptance of the Optional Clause. On 8 January 1930, the Dominions were advised that consideration was being given to adhering to the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.<sup>54</sup> This provided for the settlement of all disputes by compulsory arbitration, judicial decision, conciliation or by some combination of these methods. By its comprehensive nature, the General Act constituted the arbitration machinery required to make the Pact of Paris effective.<sup>55</sup> The Dominions were asked to appoint representatives to the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, which was to discuss the question.<sup>56</sup> New Zealand made no comment at this stage and Wilford was appointed to the committee.<sup>57</sup> On 4 July 1930, the Dominions were told that the British would announce their intention to accede to the General Act at the next Assembly, with reservations similar to those attached to the Optional Clause.<sup>58</sup>

The New Zealand Government replied on 18 July 1930 that an announcement was inadvisable until the Imperial Conference had fully discussed the matter in October 1930. Forbes believed the effect of a

joint declaration by the Commonwealth would be much greater than a declaration by Britain alone. In addition, the government was unhappy that the General Act appeared to go beyond the undertaking accepted under the Optional Clause, and that signatories would be compelled to accept arbitration in a dispute.<sup>59</sup> New Zealand's concerns were shared by South Africa and Australia.<sup>60</sup>

The British tried to play down the Dominions' concerns by assuring them that if agreement could not be reached at Geneva, the matter would be discussed at the Imperial Conference. MacDonald believed New Zealand's concerns were adequately covered by the draft reservations.<sup>61</sup> Forbes was not convinced. The General Act was only one of a number of treaties, conventions and amendments to the Covenant which the British Government wanted to accept and Forbes was worried that their combined effect would create a position comparable to that proposed by the 1924 Geneva Protocol.<sup>62</sup> Concerned that the views of the Dominions were being overridden and their legitimate concerns ignored in a hurried and ill-conceived bid to strengthen the League, he told MacDonald that New Zealand strongly deprecated Britain's intention to commit itself on such vital matters before the Imperial Conference could take place.<sup>63</sup>

Bowing to Dominion pressure, the British Government decided to take no further action on the General Act until it was discussed at the Imperial Conference. At the conference, New Zealand reiterated its objection to the obligation to arbitrate all classes of dispute.<sup>64</sup> Attorney-General Sir Thomas Sidey insisted on a specific reservation excluding immigration policy from arbitration, but the British argued that this

question was covered by the reservation on domestic legislation.<sup>65</sup> In the end, it was South Africa and not New Zealand which refused to accede to the General Act.<sup>66</sup> Even so, it was only with the greatest reluctance,<sup>67</sup> with Forbes stressing that his government reserved the right to reconsider its attitude in five years time,<sup>68</sup> that New Zealand joined Britain, Australia and India in signing the General Act on 21 May 1931. Of all the British initiatives at the 1929 Assembly, the General Act was the only one which was ratified.

Like the General Act, the General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War began as a model treaty in 1928.<sup>69</sup> Developed by the Committee on Arbitration and Security, the model treaties were designed as a guide for League members wishing to construct a more extensive system of safeguards of peace than the Covenant alone could provide.<sup>70</sup> The model convention was intended to reduce the danger of a dispute escalating into war by strengthening the powers of the Council under Article 11 of the Covenant. Parties to the convention were required, in advance, to abide by the Council's recommendations, which could include the cancellation of mobilization orders, the withdrawal of troops or even the cessation of hostilities. At the Tenth Assembly, Henderson proposed that it should be developed into a general agreement. The model convention was sent back to the Committee on Arbitration and Security for discussion. In light of the fact that under the Pact of Paris recourse to war had been outlawed, the apparent necessity for such a convention was, as Berendsen pointed out, "a cynical reflection on the bona fides of the signatories of the Paris Pact."<sup>71</sup>



It was clear from the beginning that the Committee's task would be a difficult one. Many League members were reluctant to pledge themselves in advance to obey the orders of the Council during a dispute. Questions about how the Council was to enforce its orders against a reluctant signatory were raised. Would a system of supervision or even sanctions be required to ensure the Council's orders were carried out? The British Chiefs of Staff opposed the convention because it gave the Council the power to forbid any military or naval preparations. It was suggested that an aggressor would be at an advantage because its forces would be ready for an attack whereas the intended victim would be prevented from strengthening its defences.<sup>72</sup> Because New Zealand's security would be in jeopardy if the Royal Navy was prevented from sending a fleet to Singapore in anticipation of war, Wilford strongly supported the Admiralty's objections in the Committee of Imperial Defence.<sup>73</sup>

Neither the Committee on Arbitration and Security nor the Eleventh Assembly were able to agree on the terms of the convention. The problem centred on whether it should contain a rigid formula designed to meet every conceivable contingency, or merely make the moral obligation of Article 11 a contractual one with no extension of the sanctions of Article 16. Wilford was personally against sanctions determined beforehand without regard to circumstances. He told the Third Committee that because the Soviet Union and the United States were not members, the League had to be careful to prevent sanctions from becoming a double-edged sword. He believed the Council already had sufficient powers and thus the terms of Article 11 required no further definition.<sup>74</sup> This view was consistent with New Zealand's attitude that it was unwise

and indeed unnecessary to tamper with the Covenant.

A committee was appointed by the Council to produce a convention for submission to the 1931 Assembly. Although completed by mid-May 1931, New Zealand did not receive a copy of the General Convention until two months later. On 8 August 1931, the British Government was told that New Zealand was still concerned about the possible effect of the convention on the freedom of movement of British forces during a crisis. The Dominion was also doubtful whether every member of the League would obey the orders of the Council, since there was little probability that penalties could be enforced against a recalcitrant state. Should these problems be resolved, however, New Zealand agreed with Britain that ratification must be conditional on the implementation of a general disarmament treaty.<sup>75</sup>

The British Government replied that it thought the convention's terms did not unduly limit the rights of the Commonwealth and Britain did not intend to attach further reservations.<sup>76</sup> The New Zealand Government was not satisfied and Wilford was advised to be cautious at the Assembly. Forbes told him that he was not in favour of signing the convention, describing it as badly drafted, futile in cases of bad faith, and dangerous for the Commonwealth. New Zealand would not take any action until Wilford had obtained the views of the other Dominions.<sup>77</sup>

The General Convention was already being overtaken by events, however. On 18 September 1931, the Japanese invaded Manchuria and the

Council was faced with its greatest crisis to date. Wilford noted that the Council's irresolution in a case somewhat analogous to that envisaged by Article 2 of the convention made him wonder whether it was worth the paper it was written upon.<sup>78</sup> Although it was approved by the Assembly, Britain did not sign the General Convention. The formation of the National Government and the amendments made by the Third Committee led Britain to postpone its decision and New Zealand happily did likewise.<sup>79</sup> Not surprisingly, the government expressed no regret when the British decided in January 1932 not to sign the convention until the result of the Disarmament Conference beginning later that year was known.<sup>80</sup>

The Optional Clause, the General Act and the General Convention were expressions of the League's faith in the power of arbitration to prevent disputes escalating into war. It was hoped the security these instruments provided would encourage League members to look more favourably on the proposals for disarmament. But Finland told the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference in 1926 that small states might find it difficult to accept restrictions on their right to build up stocks of armaments unless they could be sure that they could obtain immediate supplies of war materiel in an emergency.

It was probable that in such a case these states would find it beyond their financial resources to obtain the necessary supplies. The Finnish delegate proposed that financial assistance should be provided to states which were the victims of unprovoked aggression, to enable them to purchase defence materiel until the League could take action

under Article 16. From this proposal developed the Convention on Financial Assistance, which enabled a League member which was the victim of, or was threatened by, aggression to seek loans on the international market to pay for defence materiel. These loans would be guaranteed by all the signatories to the convention.<sup>81</sup>

When the convention was submitted to the Assembly in 1929, many of the delegates expressed dissatisfaction with its terms. Canada proposed that individual governments should approve the loans, not the Council. Other delegates believed the loans should be supervised to ensure they were used for their intended purpose. Parr opposed both suggestions. He argued that the purpose of the convention was to provide prompt international assistance, which would be impossible under the Canadian proposal. Similarly, it was unreasonable to ask a state under attack which wanted to make an immediate purchase of munitions, to wait until an international committee decided whether the purchase was legitimate. Parr believed the convention would encourage disarmament and he urged the government to give it serious consideration.<sup>82</sup>

The British insistence that it should only come into force simultaneously with a general disarmament treaty, stymied agreement on the convention and it was held over until 1930.<sup>83</sup> In July 1930, Wilford was told that New Zealand had no grave objections to the convention but because of the British reservation there was no need for haste in deciding the Dominion's attitude.<sup>84</sup> A revised draft, which included an article linking the convention to a disarmament treaty, was adopted by the Assembly on 2 October 1930.<sup>85</sup> Britain, Australia and the Irish Free State

signed the Convention on Financial Assistance but, because its implementation depended on the outcome of the Disarmament Conference, Forbes advised Wilford that New Zealand would not sign in the meantime.<sup>86</sup> Since the government was not optimistic about the conference's prospects for success, there can be little doubt that Forbes did not expect the convention to be put into effect.

The Convention on Financial Assistance, the General Act and the General Convention were designed to clarify, define and enhance the effectiveness of the Covenant. But from 1920 there had been numerous calls to amend the Covenant itself in order to achieve the same object. These attempts had largely failed because the members of the League were wary of either defining their obligations too explicitly or unduly restricting the League's powers. Following their signature of the Pact of Paris, however, the League members realised that the Covenant had to be amended to resolve a serious inconsistency between the two instruments. Under the Pact of Paris the signatories voluntarily renounced war as an instrument of national policy. Yet the Covenant permitted recourse to war as an ultimate means of settling international disputes in certain circumstances; the so-called 'gap' which the Geneva Protocol had attempted to close.

At the Tenth Assembly the British delegation proposed amendments to Articles 12, 13 and 15 to eliminate the right of recourse to war.<sup>87</sup> A Committee of Eleven was established to study how the Covenant could be brought into harmony with the Pact of Paris. In its report, which was circulated to League members in March 1930, the Committee backed the

British amendments but also proposed two more. It urged that Article 15 should be amended to allow arbitration in circumstances where no military clash had occurred, and that the Council should be allowed to seek the opinion of the Permanent Court on points of law relating to a dispute.

The British Government believed that most of the differences between its proposals and those of the Committee were of detail only. Wellington was told that Britain objected only to the amendment which allowed the Council to ask for an advisory opinion from the Permanent Court, as this would prevent the United States from acceding to the Statute of the Court.<sup>88</sup> The New Zealand Government thought the Committee's recommendations went much further than the British Government allowed. Forbes declared that the amendments were an unexpected advance on the provisions of the General Act, the Covenant, the Pact of Paris and the Optional Clause. It appeared that every member of the League would in future be involved in every conflict that arose.<sup>89</sup> The British tried to reassure Forbes<sup>90</sup> but he said New Zealand was not convinced that amending the Covenant was necessary or desirable.<sup>91</sup>

A compromise formula was produced at the Assembly in September 1930 but it still did not satisfy all the delegates. It was decided to hold the question over until the following year.<sup>92</sup> New Zealand found the compromise amendments more acceptable because they either omitted or re-drafted the proposals of the Committee of Eleven which the government had found objectionable. The following month, Sidey told the Imperial Conference that New Zealand still believed some extension of the

League's power to impose sanctions was involved but the Dominion was prepared to accept the compromise formula if the rest of the Commonwealth agreed to do so.<sup>93</sup> The conference was reluctant to make a decision on the amendments until the Assembly had agreed on their final form but this prospect seemed remote.<sup>94</sup> It was obvious that the whole question of amending the Covenant had raised enormous difficulties. The Twelfth Assembly finally abandoned the attempt and the proposals were shelved.<sup>95</sup> But the serious problems which were to confront the League over the next few years made it almost inevitable that the question would be raised again.

It is ironic that the British insistence that the implementation of the amendments to the Covenant, the General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War and the Convention on Financial Assistance should be dependent on the success of the Disarmament Conference, proved to be their fatal weakness. The withdrawal of Germany from the conference in 1933 not only dashed hopes for a general disarmament treaty but made dead letters of the conventions and the amendments also. The great expectations for disarmament and a secure peace which had been generated by the initiatives of the British delegation at the 1929 Assembly were shattered by economic depression and rampant nationalism.

The campaign mounted by New Zealand against the League policy of the British Labour Government proved that the Dominion Government would go to some lengths to oppose anything it perceived as damaging to the interests of the Commonwealth. Although one could argue that New Zealand's objections, combined with those of the other Dominions, persuaded

Britain to add further conditions to its acceptance of the Optional Clause, one must acknowledge that the Dominion was not prepared to break with the Commonwealth on this or other League issues when the final decision had to be made. As R.F. Holland has suggested, the very strategic vulnerability which made New Zealand oppose unqualified League arbitration so strenuously, also made it impossible for the Dominion to stake out an independent position on the matter.<sup>96</sup>



## REFERENCES

- 1 Burdon, pp.63,126,131-132; Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. I, pp.718-719; Ross, A. New Zealand and the Commonwealth to 1939. In The Commonwealth: Its Past, Present and Future. Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1973, p.12; Beaglehole, p.89; Noonan, R. George Forbes: The Inflexible Conservative. In New Zealand's Heritage. VI, pp.2281-2286
- 2 Miller, K.E. Socialism and Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice in Britain to 1931. The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1967, pp.195-196,208-209; Carlton. MacDonald..., pp.18-20,73-75; Winkler, pp.318-319; Birn, p.86
- 3 See Dominion, 18 Dec 1928; Evening Post, 18 Dec 1928; NZ Herald, 18 Dec 1928, EA1:412/2/1(1); also Walters, pp.393-394
- 4 See Berendsen's brief for the New Zealand delegates to the 1930 Imperial Conference. 2.A.4. General Peace and Arbitration Policies Including Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. Section on Disarmament, nd, EA11:37
- 5 NZPD, 11 Aug 1930, Vol.225, p.91
- 6 SSDA to GGNZ, 22 Jun 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 7 GGNZ to SSDA, 15 Jul 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); Holland, p.96
- 8 SSDA to GGNZ, 1,1 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); Carlton. MacDonald..., pp.75-76; Miller, p.209
- 9 Cecil to Henderson, 29 Jul 1929; FO memo OC(29)13, 22 Aug 1929, DBFP. Series 1A. VI. Medlicott, W.N., Dakin, D. & Lambert, M.E.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975, pp.771,792-793
- 10 Holland, p.98; see Wilford to Ward, 8 May 1930, EA1:153/15/1(1); Imp Conf 1930, NZ Delegates Brief 2.0.3. Notes on Foreign Countries: Egypt, EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 11 Berendsen to Ward, 25 Jun, Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 12 GGNZ to SSDA, 10,10 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); also list on file EA1:153/15/1(1); Imp Conf 1930, Principal Delegates, 3rd meeting, 3 Oct 1930, Appendix 1, G40:7
- 13 Ward to Bruce, 10 Aug 1929, G48:I/5; Ward to DomPMs, 21 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 14 Bruce to PMD, 15,16 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); Bruce to Ward, 15 Aug 1929, G48:I/5; also Casey to Bruce, 12 Sep 1929, My Dear P.M., pp.559-560

- 15 GGNZ to SSDA, 21 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 16 Holland, p.100; Cecil, p.202; Carlton. MacDonald..., p.77; Miller, p. 209
- 17 Note on Optional Clause by Henderson, nd(c.22 Aug 1929); FO memo OC (29)13, 22 Aug 1929, DBFP. Series 1A. VI, pp.786-793
- 18 King to PMD, 9 Aug 1929; P. McGilligan(Min.Ext.Affairs, IFS) to PMD, 27 Aug 1929; J.B.M. Hertzog(PM, Sth Africa) to PMD, 24 Aug 1929, EA2: 106/2/7(1)
- 19 SSDA to GGNZ, 20 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); see Sir Harry Batterbee's (Asst.Sec.DO) views. Holland, p.96
- 20 British Cab. Cmte on Optional Clause, 3rd meeting, 27 Aug 1929; SSDA to GGNZ, 28 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); Holland, pp.101-102
- 21 Parr to PMD, 27,29 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); Parr to PMD, 1 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 22 Ward to Bruce(draft), 30 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 23 Bruce to PMD, 30 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1)
- 24 GGNZ to SSDA, 31 Aug 1929; see King to PMD, 31 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7 (1); Parr to PMD, 1 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 25 Report on 10th Assembly, p.18. EA2:114/3/2(3)
- 26 Parr to PMD, 2 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 27 GGNZ to SSDA, 3 Sep 1929, G48:0/1; Ward to Parr, 3 Sep 1929, EA2: 106/2/7(2)
- 28 Parr to PMD, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 29 LNOJ. SS75. 10th Assembly. 3rd Plenary meeting, 3 Sep 1929, pp.34-35
- 30 Report on 10th Assembly, p.7,2, EA2:114/3/2(3); Parr to PMD, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 31 Parr to PMD, 3,4,5,7 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 32 Parr to PMD, 12,16 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2); Cecil to Henderson, 25 Sep 1929, DBFP. Series 1A. VI, pp.797-799
- 33 See Lauterpacht, H. The British Reservations to the Optional Clause. Economica. 10, 1930, pp.137-172
- 34 Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1929. London: Oxford University Press, 1930, p.78. New Zealand ratified the Clause on 27 March 1930. SSDA to GGNZ, 1 Apr 1930, EA2:106/2/7(2)

- 35 Parr to Ward, 23 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2)
- 36 Press, 5 Sep 1929; Auckland Star, 6 Sep 1929; Dominion, 13 Sep 1929; Evening Post, 20 Sep 1929; NZ Herald, 21 Sep 1929; see files EA2:106/2/7(2) & EA2:106/2/8(1)
- 37 PMO Record of deputation from LNU Dom. Council to PM, 29 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/8(1); see C.R.N. Mackie(Hon.Sec, Nat. Peace Council) to Ward, 27 Aug 1929, EA2:106/2/7(1); Rev. H.E. Bellhouse(Pres.LNU, Dunedin) to Ward, 8 Sep 1929; C.I. Shirtcliffe(Hon.Sec.LNU, Timaru) to Ward, 13 Sep 1929, EA2:106/2/7(2); NZPD, 19 Sep 1929, Vol.222, pp. 1092-1108
- 38 Parr to Ward, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1); 'Dominion Representation on the Council', Oct 1929, DCER. IV, pp.631-633
- 39 Parr to Ward, 24 Sep 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 40 Carter, p.141; see Casey to Bruce, 12 Sep 1929, My Dear P.M., pp.559-560
- 41 McGilligan to PMD, 24 Mar 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 42 Forbes to Wilford, 29 Mar 1930; Wilford to PMD, 1 Apr 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 43 Scullin to PMD, 3 Apr 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 44 Ward to Scullin, 5 Apr 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 45 Scullin to PMD, 12 Apr 1930; Ward to McGilligan, 15 Apr 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 46 Burdon, pp.48,63; McGibbon, p.190 n.46; Who's Who in New Zealand.... 3rd ed, p.348; see Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.80; Lee, J.A. Rhetoric at the Red Dawn. Auckland: Collins, 1965, Chapter 8
- 47 SSDA to GGNZ, 3 Jun 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 48 McGilligan to Forbes, 19 Jun 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2); Skelton to Riddell, 19 Jun 1930, DCER. IV, p.636
- 49 GGNZ to SSDA, 25 Jul 1930, EA2:114/4/5(1); see GGNZ to SSDA, 24 Aug 1931, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 50 Forbes to Wilford, 21 Jul 1930, EA2:114/2/2(1); Forbes to Wilford, 12 Aug 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 51 Forbes to Wilford, 29 Mar 1930, EA2:114/4/5(2)
- 52 Skelton to Riddell, 19 Jun 1930, DCER. IV, p.636
- 53 Parr to Ward, 3 Sep 1929, EA2:114/2/2(1)

- 54 On the General Act see Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1931. London: Oxford University Press, 1932, pp.246-254
- 55 Ibid, pp.246-247
- 56 SSDA to GGNZ, 8 Jan 1930, EA1:111/16/7(1); see SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Aug 1929, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 57 GGNZ to SSDA, 16 Jan 1930, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 58 SSDA to GGNZ, 4 Jul 1930, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 59 GGNZ to SSDA, 18 Jul 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3); see LNOJ. SS76. 10th Assembly. 1st Cmte, 8th meeting, 20 Sep 1929, p.49
- 60 Imp Conf 1930, E22. 'The General Act...', enc. no.2, Docs.2,6,7, G40:6
- 61 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Jul 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 62 Forbes to Wilford, 21 Jul 1930, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 63 GGNZ to SSDA, 12 Aug 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 64 Imp Conf 1930, NZ Delegates Brief 2.A.4, Section on General Act, EA11:37
- 65 Imp Conf 1930, Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament, 1st meeting, 15 Oct 1930; 2nd meeting, 16 Oct 1930; 6th meeting, 22 Oct 1930; 8th meeting, 31 Oct 1930, EA11:35; Principal Delegates, 17th meeting, 4 Nov 1930, G40:7; E40. Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament. Report, pp.2-5, G40:6
- 66 Imp Conf 1930, E41. Summary of Proceedings, p.29, G40:6; see Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament, 8th meeting, 31 Oct 1930, EA11:35; Carlton. MacDonald..., p.93
- 67 SSDA to GGNZ, 29 Dec 1930, 9 Feb 1931; GGNZ to SSDA, 20 Mar 1931; Berendsen to Sidey, 18 May 1931, EA1:111/16/7(1); NZPD, 21 Jul 1931, Vol.228, pp.547-548; Miller, p.211
- 68 SSDA to GGNZ, 5 May 1931; GGNZ to SSDA, 9 May 1931, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 69 On the General Convention see Survey...1931, pp.254-259; Documents on International Affairs, 1931. Wheeler-Bennett, J.W.(ed) London: Oxford University Press, 1932, pp.97-104
- 70 Walters, p.383
- 71 Imp Conf 1930, NZ Delegates Brief 2.A.4, Section on the Model Treaty for Strengthening the Means to Prevent War, EA11:37
- 72 CID 986-B. Model Treaty to Strengthen the Means of Preventing War. Chiefs of Staff Report on Report of Sub-cmte on the Reduction and

- Limitation of Armaments, 2 May 1930, EA1:111/13/2(1); Imp Conf 1930, NZ Delegates Brief 2.A.4, Section on Model Treaty..., EA11:37; Roskill. II, p.499
- 73 CID 976-B. Model Treaty to Strengthen the Means of Preventing War. Report of Sub-cmte on the Reduction & Limitation of Armaments, 26 Mar 1930, EA1:111/13/2(1); Wilford to Ward, 8 May 1930, EA1:153/15/1(1)
- 74 Report on 11th Assembly, pp.43-46, EA2:114/3/2(4); LNOJ. SS87. 11th Assembly. 3rd Cmte, 5th meeting, 22 Sep 1930, pp.61-62
- 75 GGNZ to SSDA, 8 Aug 1931, EA1:111/13/2(1); Forbes to Wilford, 1 Jul 1931, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 76 SSDA to GGNZ, 3 Sep 1931; see Wilford to PMD, 15 Sep 1931, EA1:111/13/2(1)
- 77 Forbes to Wilford, 7 Sep 1931, EA1:111/13/2(1)
- 78 Wilford to Forbes, 1 Oct 1931, EA1:111/13/2(1)
- 79 Wilford to PMD, 28 Sep 1931; Forbes to Wilford, 24 Nov 1931, EA1:111/13/2(1). See Knowles to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1931; Berendsen to Knowles, 28 Jan 1932, EA1:114/3/2(4)
- 80 SSDA to GGNZ, 27 Jan 1932; GGNZ to SSDA, 2 Feb 1932, EA1:111/13/2(1)
- 81 On the Convention on Financial Assistance see Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1930. London: Oxford University Press, 1931, pp.82-91; Documents on International Affairs, 1930. Wheeler-Bennett, J.W.(ed) London: Oxford University Press, 1931, pp.41,45-60
- 82 Report on 10th Assembly, pp.57-60,63, EA2:114/3/2(3); LNOJ. SS78. 10th Assembly. 3rd Cmte, 6th meeting, 17 Sep 1929, p.53
- 83 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Aug 1929, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 84 Forbes to Wilford, 21 Jul 1930, EA2:114/2/2(1); see SSDA to GGNZ, 23 Apr 1930, EA1:111/16/10(1)
- 85 LNOJ. SS87. 11th Assembly. 3rd Cmte, 2nd meeting, 18 Sep 1930, p.24; 4th meeting, 20 Sep 1930, p.49; 6th meeting, 23 Sep 1930, pp.69-70. See Knowles to Berendsen, 29 Nov 1930, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 86 Forbes to Wilford, 1 Jul 1931, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 87 On the amendments to the Covenant see Documents...1930, pp.40-44
- 88 SSDA to GGNZ, 13 Jul 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3); see Carlton. MacDonald..., pp.87-91
- 89 GGNZ to SSDA, 18 Jul 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3)

- 90 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Jul 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 91 Forbes to Wilford, 21 Jul 1930, EA2:114/2/2(1); GGNZ to SSDA, 12 Aug 1930, EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 92 Imp Conf 1930, E(AD)2. Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament. Amendments to the Covenant of the League of Nations, EA2:114/1/1(3); see C.W. Dixon(DO) to Berendsen, 16 Jan 1931, EA2:114/1/1(4); Report on 11th Assembly, p.22, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 93 Imp Conf 1930, Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament, 5th meeting, 21 Oct 1930, EA11:35
- 94 Imp Conf 1930, E40. Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament. Report, pp.7-8, G40:6. Cf. draft report. EA2:114/1/1(3)
- 95 Winkler, p.333. The Commonwealth was prepared to accept the amendments subject to some minor textual changes. SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Jan 1931; GGNZ to SSDA, 18 Feb 1931; Wilford to Forbes, 10 Apr 1931; Forbes to Wilford, 25 May 1931; SSDA to GGNZ, 29 Jan 1932, EA2:114/1/1(4); Berendsen to Knowles, 28 Jan 1932, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 96 Holland, p.102

## CHAPTER 6

## 'PLAYING IN THE AIR WITH THE ANGELS',

1930-1935

The New Zealand Government believed the British Labour Government was unwise to conduct its foreign policy on the assumption that the marked improvement in international relations of the late 1920s would continue uninterrupted. Concerned about the decline of the Commonwealth's defence capabilities, Forbes stated in 1930 that the possibility of international complications could not be ignored, and that a rapid deterioration in the world situation was still likely.<sup>1</sup> Within a year, events had confirmed the accuracy of his warning. By 1931, the economies of most countries were seriously debilitated by the financial depression and their governments were preoccupied with the immense domestic problems the economic crisis had created. It was precisely at this time, when the members of the international community were becoming less receptive to the ideal of internationalism, that the League faced its most serious challenge to date in the Manchurian crisis.

On the night of 18 September 1931, Japanese troops attacked Chinese forces in Manchuria and quickly seized the provincial capital of Mukden.<sup>2</sup> Japan had long coveted Manchuria and had extensive interests there but it is most probable that the government did not authorise the army's action. With military and ultra-nationalist groups undermining its authority, however, the Japanese Government could not prevent the army from occupying the whole of southern Manchuria by the end of the

year. Responding to the Chinese appeal to the League under Article 11 of the Covenant, the Council called on Japan to withdraw but the Japanese asserted their right to defend their interests. Frustrated by Japanese obduracy but unwilling to contemplate sanctions, the Council appointed a Commission of Enquiry led by Lord Lytton, on 10 December 1931, to investigate the dispute. The Council's face-saving and delaying tactic could not, however, wholly disguise its impotency in the face of an aggressive Great Power.<sup>3</sup>

New Zealand was preoccupied with a political crisis at home when the fighting broke out in Manchuria. The United Government had proved ineffectual in trying to cope with the worsening economic crisis and had agreed to form a coalition with the Reform Party to stave off political defeat. On 18 September 1931, the new National Government was announced with Forbes as Prime Minister and Coates as his deputy. A general election was planned for December 1931. In the midst of these political and economic troubles, the majority of New Zealanders were uninterested in the Manchurian dispute. Few had more than a superficial knowledge of the Far East.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it was the initial dearth of information about the conflict which determined New Zealand's low-key reaction to the conflict.

In London, the dispute was also initially overshadowed by domestic political and economic problems. But even as it became apparent during October 1931 that the Manchurian situation was becoming a serious test of the League's authority, the British Government followed a policy of caution. It was particularly anxious that the League should take no



action which might lead to hostilities, the brunt of which would be borne by the Royal Navy. Because Japan possessed overwhelming naval superiority in the northern Pacific, the British were in no position to oppose the Japanese militarily and there was no confidence that the Americans would provide more than moral support. In any case, there was considerable sympathy for Japan in British political and commercial circles.<sup>5</sup>

The New Zealand Government was informed but not consulted on British policy in regard to the crisis.<sup>6</sup> There can be no doubt, however, that Forbes was aware of British weakness in the Far East and the necessity for avoiding the risk of conflict with Japan. The government realised that despite the considerable damage it would do to the prestige of the League, Britain could do little until the Singapore Base was completed.<sup>7</sup> But while the government remained characteristically silent, the Dominion's newspapers devoted a great deal of attention to the dispute.

It was generally accepted by the press that a state of virtual war existed in Manchuria between two members of the League Council, and that this presented a tremendous challenge to the League. Dependent as they were on cable news from London, most editors, and the LNU also, were reluctant to lay blame on either party.<sup>8</sup> Some papers tried to explain Japan's actions, or even justify them, by emphasising the Japanese need for raw materials and space for an expanding population, while others noted that the Japanese economy had been badly affected by the Depression. A number argued that while Japan's resort to arms was unacceptable, the Chinese had to some extent provoked this response by implicit-

ly condoning attacks on Japanese citizens and economic interests legitimately present in Manchuria.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, it was partly in response to attacks on Japanese civilians and an effective boycott of Japanese goods in Shanghai, that Japanese forces attacked the Chinese section of the city on 28 January 1932; an attack which included the indiscriminate bombing of civilians from the air. This action, which also threatened the considerable Western interests in Shanghai, caused outrage around the world and, combined with the fact that the Chinese fought back strongly, generated much sympathy for China.<sup>10</sup>

In New Zealand, the press roundly condemned the Japanese action.<sup>11</sup> The Christchurch Sun pointed out that if Japan was allowed to break its obligations under the Covenant, the Pact of Paris and the Washington Nine-Power Treaty without encountering any resistance, then the peace efforts of a decade would count for nothing.<sup>12</sup> There was uncertainty, however, whether the League was capable of disciplining Japan. Some papers believed it was vital for the League to act not only to restore peace but also to guarantee its own future.<sup>13</sup> The Press thought that only a combination of powers with interests in the Far East, led by Britain and the United States, would be able to stop further Japanese aggression.<sup>14</sup>

Certainly, the League had done nothing by February 1932 to boost confidence in its effectiveness. Under British pressure, the Council had merely refused to recognise any territorial change or alteration in

political status which might result from Japanese aggression. China then invoked Article 15 of the Covenant but after achieving little it decided to take its appeal to the Assembly. Frustrated by what Wilford scathingly termed the incompetence of the Council,<sup>15</sup> the Chinese hoped to tap the growing indignation of League members over the Council's inaction.<sup>16</sup>

In Wellington, the government was concerned about these developments but it remained circumspect. Parliament was told that the government deeply regretted the recent disturbance of peaceful relations between two nations with whom New Zealand had long enjoyed friendly commercial intercourse. No mention was made of the League but hope was expressed that Britain and the other powers would find a solution to the dispute.<sup>17</sup> In anticipation of the special session of the Assembly in early March 1932, Wilford was instructed to "conform generally with British policy" while keeping the government fully informed of developments.<sup>18</sup>

Britain was most anxious that the Assembly should not take any action which might provoke Japan. At a meeting of the Commonwealth delegates before the Assembly opened on 3 March 1932, the British delegate explained that Britain wanted the Assembly to confine itself to supporting the Council's actions until the Lytton Commission had reported. Canada, Australia and India agreed but South Africa and the Irish Free State favoured stronger action to indicate the Assembly's displeasure with Japan.<sup>19</sup> There is reason to believe that Wilford personally supported the latter view. According to American Secretary of State

Henry L. Stimson, who met Wilford and South African delegate Charles te Water in Geneva on 19 April 1932, both men were disturbed by the lack of determination in the British attitude. Stimson also noted that they favoured greater co-operation between Britain and the United States in the efforts to settle the crisis.<sup>20</sup>

Wilford nevertheless obeyed his instructions and said nothing at the Assembly. He told Forbes that he took "an entirely neutral part in the Sino-Japanese conflict" because he felt that New Zealand was "too close to both of them to take a side."<sup>21</sup> By contrast, te Water delivered a strong speech against Japan which also condemned the inaction of the Great Powers. Wilford noted that while the small states were greatly concerned about the damaging effect of the dispute on the League, there was no suggestion that Article 16 of the Covenant should be invoked. He considered such a move would have been premature, in any case, because the machinery provided by Article 15 and other Articles had not yet been wholly applied.<sup>22</sup>

The British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, confined the action of the Assembly to a resolution embodying the doctrine of non-recognition and an insistence on the applicability of the Covenant and the concept of peaceful arbitration to the dispute.<sup>23</sup> Wilford was uncertain what the resolution would achieve.<sup>24</sup> One can sense his growing disenchantment with the League as it proved incapable of influencing events in the dispute, including the establishment of the puppet-state of Manchukuo in March 1932 and the armistice at Shanghai two months later. In Wellington also, concern was being expressed privately about the

way the League was handling the crisis. Berendsen told Wilford's Private Secretary, Charles Knowles: "...I think the whole world has had a big shock at the actual working of the League's machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes as exemplified in the Far East..." He said that the final outcome of "this extraordinary business" was being awaited with great interest.<sup>25</sup>

The report of the Lytton Commission was finally published on 2 October 1932. While it conceded there had been shortcomings in the Chinese administration of Manchuria, and that there were some legitimate causes for complaint by Japan, the report condemned Japan's role in the conflict. It concluded that the military action taken by the Japanese could not be justified as self-defence; that there was no spontaneous movement to gain independence for Manchuria; and that Manchukuo was a purely Japanese creation. The Commission recommended that a special regime should be established in Manchuria to ensure Chinese sovereignty while protecting Japan's special position.<sup>26</sup>

Before the publication of the report, the New Zealand LNU had been in a quandry. From early 1932, President James Gibb and other LNU leaders had condemned Japanese aggression but, although there was goodwill towards China, considerable sympathy for Japan remained. The New Zealand Government was urged to support Britain and the United States in upholding the League but, at the same time, there was considerable doubt as to how the League should act. Some members called for action against Japan, including military sanctions, but the Dominion Council preferred to wait until the Lytton Commission had given a lead. The LNU

did, however, petition the government to call for international control of the manufacture of arms for, and their trade to, the belligerents. The Lytton Report's findings were approved by the LNU and it accepted that the way was now open for economic and military sanctions. Nevertheless, there was little enthusiasm for such action and some doubt whether the League was capable of imposing sanctions.<sup>27</sup>

The British Cabinet decided on 23 November 1932 that while British loyalty to the League must be seen to be beyond doubt at Geneva, Britain should also endeavour to be fair to both China and Japan without antagonising either.<sup>28</sup> This delicate balancing act did not please Wilford when he was informed of the plan the following day.<sup>29</sup> Having little faith in the League's capabilities, he had come to the conclusion that the Commonwealth's interests would be best served by appeasing Japan. It is perhaps indicative of this attitude that, despite his well-known dislike of the Japanese, Wilford had only recently accompanied the Japanese Ambassador to Britain on a visit to Italy to meet Benito Mussolini.<sup>30</sup>

On his own initiative, Wilford conveyed his views to Sir Victor Wellesley, the Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at the Foreign Office on 28 November 1932. He told Wellesley that as the strongest power in the Far East, Japan constituted a grave threat to Australia and New Zealand. It was important, therefore, for the Commonwealth to keep on the right side of Japan and back it in the present dispute. Wilford believed Japan was the Commonwealth's chief bulwark against the spread of Communism in China. Wellesley suggested

that Britain could not ignore the dispute's moral dimension so easily as Wilford. He said the matter was before the League and the British Government would do nothing to undermine the League's prestige.

Surprised that Britain still believed the League had any prestige left, Wilford said the Lytton Report, which he described as "mere trimming", showed that the League was unwilling to take a firm stand. He argued that whether Japan had ignored its obligations under the international treaties was no longer the main issue. A realistic rather than a legalistic approach was now required, which meant acceptance of the fact that no one could preserve law and order in Manchuria but Japan. Wilford intended to recommend to his government that New Zealand should support Japan at the Assembly if it was summoned in the near future. As a former Minister of Defence and having a reputation as something of a specialist in Far Eastern matters, he thought Forbes would accept his advice. He claimed his only object in coming to the Foreign Office was to make sure that if Forbes did agree to this course, it would not embarrass the British Government.

Wellesley was understandably concerned about such a naive proposal and he made it clear that it was unacceptable. Wilford should have known that any display of Commonwealth disunity in the Assembly was an anathema to the British Government, especially over an issue with such serious implications for imperial security. Wellesley said it was unlikely that a straight vote would take place and he warned of the dangers of a hasty decision. Emphasising that the object of British policy was to find a solution which antagonised neither side while leaving the

League's prestige unimpaired, he said the best course would be to wait and see how things developed.<sup>31</sup> Wilford was sufficiently impressed by Wellesley's argument not to take the matter further. He probably realised that if the British were unhappy with the idea, it was extremely unlikely that Forbes would sanction an independent New Zealand effort to conciliate Japan.<sup>32</sup>

There was certainly no divergence from the British position at the Special Assembly in December 1932.<sup>33</sup> Largely due to Great Power pressure, the Assembly did no more than request its special committee on the Manchurian dispute, the Committee of Nineteen, to consider the Lytton Report and make recommendations to the next Assembly.<sup>34</sup> In February 1933, the Committee presented its report which substantially recapitulated the findings of the Lytton Commission. With only Japan opposed, the Assembly accepted the report.<sup>35</sup> The Japanese immediately withdrew and a month later announced their intention to resign from the League. Having exhausted all the possibilities short of sanctions, the League could only look on as Japan occupied Jehol and finally forced China to agree to an armistice at the end of May 1933.<sup>36</sup>

The reaction of the New Zealand press to these events was mixed. A few newspapers called on the League to abandon its policy of non-recognition in order to pacify Japan and pave the way for its return to the League.<sup>37</sup> Others were concerned about the effect of Japan's resignation on the League. Some editors believed the League would become more orientated towards Europe and that those major powers which remained as members would be reluctant to commit themselves to League decis-



ions which could bring them into conflict with outside powers.<sup>38</sup> The Press hoped Japan's withdrawal would cause the League to re-examine its constitution to make it more effective should a similar situation arise in future.<sup>39</sup> Several papers concluded, however, that the loss of confidence in the League was so great that worldwide rearmament was inevitable.<sup>40</sup> The Manchurian situation continued to be the subject of editorials throughout 1933 but it is doubtful whether this interest was shared by the majority of their readers.

There is no evidence that any widespread anti-Japanese feeling was aroused in the Dominion. No boycott of Japanese goods was organised and Japanese visitors, including two warships which called at New Zealand's main ports in May 1935, were well-received.<sup>41</sup> Even among the leaders of the LNU, Japan was not regarded as a threat. While League supporters wrangled over whether sanctions should be imposed,<sup>42</sup> New Zealanders in general were apparently unconcerned about the damage the League had suffered. After a visit to New Zealand in late-1934/early-1935, J.V. Wilson reported to Secretary-General Joseph Avenol that "to the average person Manchuria simply showed up the League to be the vain and pretentious thing he had always supposed it to be."<sup>43</sup>

Manchuria barely rated a mention in Parliament.<sup>44</sup> On 28 February 1933, the Leader of the Opposition, Harry Holland, asked that a motion be drafted approving the attitude taken at the recent Assembly and urging Japan to accept the League's decision. Forbes replied that while the government deplored what had occurred in Manchuria, it believed that "no useful purpose" would be served by such action while the matter was

still before the League.<sup>45</sup> One can only assume that Forbes considered any action which implied New Zealand was anti-Japanese would only serve to undermine the already strained Anglo-Japanese relationship. During his visit to the Dominion in November 1934, British Cabinet Secretary Sir Maurice Hankey found that the New Zealand Government fully approved of British efforts to improve relations with Japan.<sup>46</sup> The government probably thought it wiser to accept the Japanese fait accompli rather than exacerbate the situation further by diplomatic and economic isolation. Certainly by the time of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Silver Jubilee meetings in London in April 1935, Forbes had come to the conclusion that some form of recognition of Manchukuo was necessary to remove any remaining Japanese antagonism. He was unable to persuade the other delegates but it is clear he believed that the strategic vulnerability of Australia and New Zealand made good relations between the Commonwealth and Japan extremely important.<sup>47</sup>

The Manchurian dispute brought the weakness of the British position in the Far East into sharp relief. Faced with superior Japanese forces, Britain was compelled to follow a policy of caution bordering on neutralism. From New Zealand's point of view, the British impotency was the inevitable consequence of the decline of the power of the Royal Navy in the Pacific. The Dominion blamed this situation on the concessions Britain had made to Japan and the United States under the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty and the 1930 London Naval Treaty. New Zealand was not convinced that security and peace were the inevitable results of arms limitation. The strong impression that the British Empire was making greater sacrifices in the name of arms control than any other power,

led successive New Zealand governments to regard any proposals for disarmament with suspicion and disfavour.

Despite the Pact of Paris and other international agreements, the Ward and Forbes Governments remained sceptical whether the international climate had changed sufficiently to allow the reduction of national defences. In June 1929, Parliament was told that until definite proposals for disarmament had been prepared and generally accepted, the government believed its duty was "to maintain such measures as are necessary for the safety of the country."<sup>48</sup> The prospects for a general disarmament treaty did not look promising at that stage because the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference still had not produced a draft convention after four years work. The government felt justified, therefore, in ignoring the calls of the Labour Party and the peace campaigners to reduce the Dominion's defence budget. The Governor-General, Sir Charles Fergusson, believed that despite the influence of the League and the Pact of Paris, the great majority of New Zealanders supported the government's defence policy.<sup>49</sup>

The 1930 London Naval Treaty expanded on the Washington agreement by placing restrictions on capital ships and submarines and further limitations on cruisers.<sup>50</sup> Yet it was still not a great advance towards general disarmament. Berendsen argued that the fact that stocks of armaments were still increasing, and in many cases were heavier than before the First World War, demonstrated there was little confidence that war was at an end. He noted that even the British Labour Government, which supposedly believed that war was unthinkable, was spending over £2

million a week on armaments. Describing the current position of world armaments as "a cynical reflection on the high ideals and lofty language of the Kellogg Pact", Berendsen suggested that if preparations for war were necessary, then they should be as complete and effective as possible.<sup>51</sup>

In Geneva disarmament was still a priority, however. The prospects for a world disarmament conference had greatly improved because the Preparatory Commission had finally produced a draft arms convention. Though its provisions were vague and few states found them wholly acceptable, at least the convention provided a framework for discussion by the anticipated conference.<sup>52</sup> At the Imperial Conference in October 1930, the Commonwealth accepted the convention in principle but serious doubts were expressed about the concept of budgetary limitation of armaments, especially by New Zealand.<sup>53</sup> Because it was probable that the defence forces of the Commonwealth would be regarded as a single unit for arms reduction purposes, New Zealand feared the Dominions would be forced to accept greater cuts in their budgets than if they were assessed on an individual basis.

In January 1931, the League Council announced that the Disarmament Conference would open in February of the following year. Soon after, New Zealand was invited to nominate a representative to the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence established to formulate British policy on the conference.<sup>54</sup> The government appointed Wilford to guard the Dominion's interests.<sup>55</sup> As New Zealand's representative at the London Naval Conference the previous year, he had been distinctly

unsympathetic to the British disarmament proposals.<sup>56</sup> The discussions in the Committee of Imperial Defence simply confirmed his misgivings. He told Wellington in April 1931:

I am attending the sittings of the Committee of Imperial Defence, which is wholly run by Lord Cecil, Dr Dalton, and men of that ilk. They are thoroughly satisfied that they can disarm the world, and I suppose that as long as this Government is in power they will direct the course, steering it internationally without regard to national interests.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, the sub-committee's resolutions were very general and even contradictory, and the New Zealand Government did not believe they could be developed into a practical scheme.<sup>58</sup> It accepted, however, that the final decision on disarmament must lie with the British Government. Forbes did not expect, therefore, that New Zealand would take any prominent part in the proceedings of the Disarmament Conference.<sup>59</sup>

The government's indifference to disarmament did not reflect the opinion of all New Zealanders.<sup>60</sup> Even before the announcement that a world disarmament conference would take place, support for disarmament was growing in New Zealand. The Labour Party and various peace groups had been campaigning for the abolition of compulsory military training for some time.<sup>61</sup> In July 1930, the No More War Movement presented Forbes with a 15,000 signature petition calling for the repeal of the Defence Act. Less than a fortnight later, Minister of Defence J.G. Cobbe announced the suspension of compulsory military training.<sup>62</sup> Although he acknowledged that the move was partly in response to pressure from a New Zealand public increasingly in favour of disarmament, Cobbe preferred to describe the government's move as a temporary economy measure.<sup>63</sup>

The LNU had led a campaign for disarmament since 1926 but from 1930 it developed into something akin a crusade under Gibb's leadership. Disarmament was a more popular cause than the League and won support for the LNU, particularly among pacifists who believed that the very existence of arms threatened peace. Hoping to pressure the government into declaring its support for arms control, the LNU also wanted to ensure that New Zealand was strongly represented at the Disarmament Conference. Warning that the conference had to succeed or the League would collapse and war would be unleashed, the LNU played heavily on New Zealanders' feelings of horror at the prospect of another world war. But the LNU did not believe total disarmament was practicable. It advocated the retention of national defence forces, especially those of the Commonwealth, which could be put at the disposal of the League if required.

When the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom organised a petition in support of universal disarmament in 1931, some opposition within the LNU had to be overcome before the organisation declared its support. Forming part of a worldwide effort, the petition was circulated throughout New Zealand.<sup>64</sup> The campaign for disarmament attracted wide support and reached a peak in October 1931 when demonstrations were held in the main centres. At a meeting of 2,000 people in Wellington held to promote the petition, the leaders of the three major political parties pledged their support for disarmament. By December 1931, 42,000 signatures had been gathered and the petition was sent to Geneva to be presented to the Disarmament Conference alongside those from fifty-two other countries.<sup>65</sup>

Forbes may have thought it impolitic for the government to oppose the petition's goal but his speech to the Wellington meeting made it clear he thought it undesirable for the Commonwealth to reduce its defences any further.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the government's primary concern was to prevent the Disarmament Conference from cutting New Zealand's defences at all. In February 1931, the Secretary-General asked every member of the League to provide statistical information on their defence forces, to facilitate the work of the conference.<sup>67</sup> This request presented some difficulties for New Zealand. Because its naval forces were a division of the Royal Navy, there was the possibility of the Dominion's information duplicating that provided by Britain. A more serious problem was that New Zealand's defence forces were not considered to be at a level commensurate with its strategic requirements.<sup>68</sup> Forbes believed New Zealand might in future find it necessary to develop a separate air force or expand the army should circumstances change. The government was worried, therefore, lest the conference use the current figures as a guide to limit defence expenditure in the future.

In October 1931, Berendsen advised that for New Zealand to implement its defence policy in full, "it will be necessary not only to refuse to agree to any reduction in either our present figures or our normal figures, but to ask for a considerable increase, a policy which is likely to have somewhat awkward consequences at the Conference and in this country."<sup>69</sup> Forbes appears to have exercised substantial influence over the government's policy on the question,<sup>70</sup> and he decided that New Zealand would not even send a general statement to the League until it had been ascertained what form the British reply would take.<sup>71</sup> In the

meantime, the government's naval advisers advocated inflating New Zealand's figures to overcome the problem.<sup>72</sup> Wilford was not impressed with the suggestion and urged Forbes to send accurate returns to the League.<sup>73</sup> He perhaps feared that if the falsity of the figures was discovered then the Dominion would be put in an even more embarrassing position.<sup>74</sup> Berendsen and other officials were still convinced that some safeguard of the Dominion's future defence needs was required, however.<sup>75</sup>

In his detailed instructions to Wilford, who was to represent New Zealand at the conference,<sup>76</sup> Forbes emphasised the government's concern about this aspect. He said: "What New Zealand really asks is of course not an actual increase but the right to provide for our minimum defence requirements..." Wilford was to point out that the Dominion's position could not be compared to that of the older European countries whose defence requirements had stabilised over a lengthy period. Recognition must be given to the fact that New Zealand was still in the process of working up to its minimum requirements.

In matters relating to land and air forces, Wilford was given some discretion on accepting the figures proposed by the conference but the government's figures on naval forces were non-negotiable. He was to collaborate closely with the British delegation on naval matters but reiterate the government's opposition to any reduction of Commonwealth naval strength, particularly in cruisers. Forbes stressed that "so far as New Zealand is concerned any Convention which we could agree to sign would amount to a limitation only and not to a reduction of our present



armaments." He believed it was principally the responsibility of the Great Powers to disarm. Unless the other powers agreed to material reductions, the British Empire would, in his view, be justified in refusing to disarm further, even to rearm.

Wilford was not expected to follow the proceedings from beginning to end. For economy reasons it was anticipated that he would attend the opening of the conference, make a general statement during the early sessions, confer with the other Commonwealth delegations on imperial policy, and then return to London. Thereafter, he was to be kept informed of developments either by the British Government or by Knowles, who would remain as an observer. Wilford was to advise the government of progress as he saw fit.<sup>77</sup>

The Disarmament Conference opened on 2 February 1932 in what Berendsen described as "the worst possible atmosphere".<sup>78</sup> The Manchurian crisis was at its height, events in Germany were causing disquiet in Europe, and the Depression had become acute worldwide. Undaunted, the conference began its work with the active co-operation of the major powers. The draft convention was quickly pushed aside. The French proposed an ambitious scheme for collective security which included a permanent League police force and allowed members to retain their offensive weapons, to be used only on the orders of the League or in self-defence.<sup>79</sup> Speaking on 16 February 1932, Wilford strongly criticised the plan. He said it was a recasting of the Geneva Protocol, making the League into a superstate. He argued that general and definite prohibition in certain directions was preferable to unlimited preparation.

"There is every safeguard where preparation is prohibited, but if only the use is forbidden, can it be said that there are really any safeguards at all?" Wilford hoped disarmament would prevent further catastrophes like Japan's aggression in China. Trying to forestall any Japanese efforts to extract further concessions on naval armaments, he insisted that whatever the inadequacies of the Washington and London Naval Treaties, they must be the foundation on which the "House of Disarmament" was built. Wilford urged the conference to devise a practical arms control scheme which could be implemented in a reasonable time.<sup>80</sup>

The New Zealand Government may have hoped a general disarmament treaty would, if nothing else, allow Britain to reduce its heavy expenditure on arms, but there was little optimism that the conference would achieve anything worthwhile.<sup>81</sup> On 21 July 1932, Berendsen told Knowles that "at this distance...it all seems rather futile, and I think no one in New Zealand outside the usual peace cranks and the League of Nations Unions expects the mountain to bring anything but the proverbial mouse."<sup>82</sup> As if to confirm the accuracy of his prediction, the conference adjourned soon after without making any progress.<sup>83</sup> The conference's resolution, approved only after acrimonious debate, merely affirmed its determination to achieve substantial reductions in armaments. Wilford found it extremely disappointing.<sup>84</sup> Knowles told Berendsen: "No comment from me is required on the final resolution of the General Committee of the Disarmament Conference. It speaks for itself and you may place on it whatever value you like." Berendsen replied dryly: "I agree with you that the final resolution speaks for itself, but it speaks with a very low voice."<sup>85</sup>

The Disarmament Conference reconvened several times over the next two years but the deteriorating international situation made success increasingly remote.<sup>86</sup> The most serious blow came in October 1933 when Germany withdrew from the League. The conference did not come to an end but all sense of reality had departed from its subsequent meetings. In February 1934, Wilford's successor, Sir James Parr, told Wellington that the Foreign Secretary would welcome a message of support from New Zealand for the British Government's latest attempt to revive the conference. The government remained silent.<sup>87</sup> Still concerned that Britain might be prepared to sacrifice naval security in the quest for a disarmament agreement, Forbes did not want to give Simon any encouragement. In fact, New Zealand had given up on the conference and had not even bothered to send a representative to its later meetings.<sup>88</sup> On 25 May 1934, Parr stated baldly that his work in London was more important than attending the probable funeral of the Disarmament Conference.<sup>89</sup> Within a month the conference held its final plenary meeting and adjourned indefinitely.<sup>90</sup> Many countries were already beginning to rearm and, realising that it could not ignore the signs completely, the government was forced to give serious consideration to rebuilding New Zealand's defence forces.<sup>91</sup>

The LNU regarded the collapse of the Disarmament Conference as a disaster of the greatest magnitude. Instead of blaming the inherent weakness of the League, the LNU preferred to believe that the half-heartedness of world governments was responsible for the League's lack of success. It was more vital than ever to support the League; the Covenant had to be strengthened not scrapped. Between 1934 and 1935,

the LNU increased its propaganda work, achieving some success as New Zealanders became more aware of world affairs because of the Depression and the Manchurian crisis. But the divisions which had contributed to the LNU's hesitancy over Manchuria continued to dog the organisation.

A small group, which included Walter Nash, saw that only armed collective security could preserve peace. But their calls for adequate national defences, an international police force and the reform of the Covenant, split the LNU. Many members regarded increased military expenditure as incompatible with the ideal of collective security. There was also considerable opposition to any tampering with the Covenant. For Gibb and his pacifist friends, who had been advocating disarmament for a decade or more, to change sides mid-stream would have been an anathema. They did not perceive the Covenant as an instrument of potential coercion. There was also a residual belief that the Fascist states would not be aggressors and that they had some cause to be treated more generously. Some transferred their allegiance to the growing militant Christian and socialist-based pacifist movement. But the LNU was wary of this movement, considering its objectives to be unrealistic and unworkable. The result was that the statements emanating from the LNU became increasingly vague, leading the Evening Post to accuse it in August 1934 of not facing up to the new realities.<sup>92</sup>

New Zealand took the Disarmament Conference and the Manchurian dispute seriously but the Dominion's role was limited to supporting British policy. Though both were important tests for the League, they were viewed with the same detachment New Zealand had nearly always shown to

the activities at Geneva. Forbes claimed the Dominion was in the enviable position of being insulated from the world's political problems by its geographic isolation and British protection.<sup>93</sup> But New Zealand's economy was not in the same fortunate position and during 1930 it was hit hard by the Depression. The government began to retrench and the cost of the Dominion's League membership once again came under scrutiny.

Since Allen's campaign to restrict the League's budget in the early 1920s, few complaints had been heard from League opponents in Parliament about the size of New Zealand's contribution to the League's expenses. While the country was relatively prosperous such complaints could be ignored but in 1931 Forbes began to question whether the cost, which was approximately £12,000 annually, was acceptable at a time when the government was reducing spending on education and health. The first shot of this renewed campaign was fired in July 1930 when the cost of New Zealand's delegation to the International Labour Conference was questioned in the House. The government had finally bowed to Labour Party pressure in 1929 and the Dominion was represented for the first time at the 1930 session.<sup>94</sup> Labour MPs ridiculed the suggestion that the £900 involved would have been better used elsewhere, but New Zealand did not send another delegation until 1935.<sup>95</sup>

Wilford drew Forbes' attention to the question of the League's budget in his report on the Eleventh Assembly. He deplored the prevalent attitude of "reckless extravagance" among the delegates which had resulted in a large increase in the budget. Wilford noted that New Zealand's contribution increased each year but the Dominion received little

benefit from the League in return. The government was urged to take a much greater interest in the draft budgets it received from the League in the future.<sup>96</sup>

The government evidently took Wilford's advice seriously for in April 1931 the Treasury recommended that steps should be taken to reduce New Zealand's League contribution. It was also decided that to ease the financial burden, the contribution would be paid quarterly instead of annually.<sup>97</sup> Because these quarterly instalments were not always paid early enough, however, New Zealand was occasionally listed by the League as a member in default, much to the government's embarrassment.<sup>98</sup> In July 1931, Wilford was told that the government was very concerned about the continual increase in the League's budget. Forbes said that in a recent review of New Zealand's financial position, it had been suggested that the Dominion's League contribution should be reduced or suspended for 1931. Though sympathetic to the idea, Forbes had, apparently with some difficulty, deferred any action on it. Instead, Wilford was instructed to take whatever action he thought proper and practicable to stop the expansion of the Secretariat and the proliferation of League activities.<sup>99</sup>

At the Assembly on 10 September 1931, Wilford reminded the delegates that the present economic upheaval had forced every government to "take in a hole or two in its belt", and the League must do likewise. He emphasised that New Zealand was not advocating that the most important functions of the League be curtailed, the forthcoming Disarmament Conference being a case in point, but he was sure substantial savings

could be made by curbing some of its "sidelines". He acknowledged that his remarks might not be welcome. Nevertheless, New Zealand believed the League should make a "beau geste" by reducing its huge costs.<sup>100</sup> Wilford was obviously expecting some criticism of his stand<sup>101</sup> but he was dismayed by the Secretary-General's attack on New Zealand in the Fourth Committee during his defence of the Secretariat's management of the League's finances. Drummond stated that the organisation's cost to each of its members was very small. Noting that New Zealand's contribution represented only 0.0048% of the country's annual budget, he suggested sardonically that this burden was too small to jeopardise the Dominion's financial position.

It was a strong argument and by pointedly using New Zealand as an example Drummond hoped to undermine Wilford's case and protect the League from further attacks. But the Secretary-General had unwittingly exaggerated the figure in his example and the tactic backfired. Angered and embarrassed by the criticism, the New Zealand delegation forced Drummond to admit that the correct figure was 0.048% and to apologise for any suggestion that New Zealand was not a loyal member of the League.<sup>102</sup> In Wellington, the government was also indignant about the incident and it undoubtedly hardened Forbes' attitude on the issue.<sup>103</sup> Not everyone in New Zealand approved of the government's stand, however. The LNU, the No More War Movement and the Labour Party regarded it as an attack on the League itself.<sup>104</sup> Several newspapers also criticised the government and noted that the expenses of the League were minute compared to the amount of money spent on arms.<sup>105</sup>

Early the following year, the Treasury again questioned the size of the contribution to the League.<sup>106</sup> Because the value of New Zealand's currency had suffered when Britain abandoned the gold standard in 1931, the amount of the contribution was expected to rise appreciably. Inevitably, this was one of the areas which came under the scrutiny of the National Expenditure Commission. Made up of leading businessmen, the Commission was established by the government in February 1932 with a brief to review public expenditure and recommend where economies could be made. On 11 April 1932, Berendsen told the Commission that New Zealand's influence at the League was small and short of resigning there was very little the Dominion could do to reduce its contribution.<sup>107</sup> The Commission agreed but it still urged the government to continue to press New Zealand's case for a reduction at Geneva.<sup>108</sup>

Although New Zealand's contribution was expected to rise, the dramatic increase from about £12,000 in 1931 to over £17,000 in 1932 shocked the government. In his instructions to Wilford on 21 July 1932 regarding the forthcoming Assembly, Forbes' concern with the subject of economy overshadowed everything else. This did not mean the government thought the League a complete waste of money. But as Berendsen explained to Knowles, many in New Zealand believed the League was "playing in the air with the angels" and that the Dominion's contribution was largely "frittered away on unrealities and abstract discussions". Forbes was, therefore, prepared to back Wilford to the limit in an effort to achieve material economies in the League's administration. While Wilford might not wish to lead the attack again after his experience at the last Assembly, Berendsen noted that Britain intended to raise the matter



and Forbes expected Wilford to range himself alongside the British delegation.<sup>109</sup> In addition, Coates, who was to lead the Dominion's delegation to the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa in August 1932, was told to confer with the other delegates with a view to concerted action at Geneva on the problem of the League budget.<sup>110</sup>

Confident of British support, Wilford took a strong line in the Assembly's Fourth Committee in October 1932. He said it was unacceptable for the League to continue to pay its staff high salaries while the governments of its member-states were forced to cut the salaries of their officials. Nonetheless, because of doubts whether the Assembly had the power to break contracts and a general lack of enthusiasm for such measures, Wilford believed cuts were unlikely. He told Forbes that the Secretariat would remain an "oasis of comparative happiness".<sup>111</sup>

Wilford made several other suggestions to the Committee to help reduce expenditure but he was convinced the main problem was the non-payment of contributions by some members. The Secretariat was compelled to over-budget to compensate, which meant those countries which took their obligations seriously were paying more than their fair share. A particularly disturbing aspect of the problem was that most of the offenders were capable of paying their share. Though Wilford called on the League to consider measures to recover unpaid contributions, the Committee was only prepared to appoint a sub-committee to investigate the problem.<sup>112</sup>

While Wilford reported that there were signs that the League was

beginning to take the question of economy seriously, Forbes was not convinced.<sup>113</sup> There were still complaints in Parliament about the cost of the League to New Zealand, and even suggestions that the Dominion's representation at Geneva was a waste of money.<sup>114</sup> Forbes thought the League was not doing enough to put its house in order and Australian Prime Minister Joseph A. Lyons agreed. He believed that action must be taken in the Assembly Committees to stop the dissipation of the League's resources and he sought New Zealand's co-operation.<sup>115</sup> Forbes welcomed the Australian approach and in early August 1933 he and other Commonwealth representatives met in London to discuss the matter.<sup>116</sup>

Ironically, the meeting was only possible because they had been attending the League-sponsored World Monetary and Economic Conference which was held in London from June to July 1933.<sup>117</sup> The importance of the conference can be gauged by the fact that sixty-four countries were represented and New Zealand sent a six-man delegation led by Forbes.<sup>118</sup> It was the only conference or meeting held under the auspices of the League ever attended by a New Zealand Prime Minister. The results of the conference were extremely disappointing, however. Agreement among the major powers on the means of solving the problems caused by the Depression proved impossible. But in one respect, the conference proved memorable for Wilford. The delegates were provided with one free copy of the conference documents but when he tried to obtain further copies he was told that, as a result of New Zealand's campaign at Geneva, these would have to be paid for. Wilford argued that this confirmed that the League was beginning to take action on the budgetary problem.<sup>119</sup>

Forbes and Canadian Prime Minister Richard B. Bennett used the opportunity provided by the conference to impress upon the new Secretary-General, Joseph Avenol, the urgency of reducing the League's expenditure.<sup>120</sup> But Wilford believed the problem could not be solved by pruning alone. The meeting of the Commonwealth representatives apparently did not decide on a particular course of action, but Wilford was certain that the question of arrears must be tackled more vigorously.<sup>121</sup> Acting Prime Minister Coates warned that this might encourage further defections from the League, but he allowed Wilford to use his discretion at the 1933 Assembly, with the proviso that he work closely with the Australian and British delegates.<sup>122</sup>

In the Fourth Committee, Wilford severely criticised the manner in which the budget was drawn up and the insufficiency of the information provided on the various appropriations. If the League were an ordinary business, he said, it would be judged bankrupt. He declared that in order to save the League from financial ruin, waste must be eliminated and states which did not pay their contributions had to be dealt with. The report of the Sub-committee on Contributions in Arrears had confirmed that all the defaulting members could have paid at least part of their contributions. Wilford urged the Assembly to shame the defaulting governments into paying by giving extensive publicity to the committee's findings.<sup>123</sup>

The New Zealand delegation's "obsession"<sup>124</sup> with the budgetary question probably gave the Dominion a prominence at Geneva which it had not achieved since Allen's day. To some New Zealanders this was more a

cause for sorrow than satisfaction. The Rangitikei Advocate said it was time to end the "niggardly and dishonest propaganda against the 'extravagance' of the League", and it challenged the government to withdraw from the League if it considered its contribution had been misspent.<sup>125</sup> The Christchurch Sun described the critics of the League as "petty, ill-informed, cheese-paring people".<sup>126</sup> The LNU charged that the government's views on the subject did not truly reflect the opinion of New Zealanders.<sup>127</sup> In Parliament, Labour's Peter Fraser said the Dominion could not afford to discontinue its association with Geneva because only the League could save the world from the prospect of global destruction.

Forbes was unmoved by this criticism, although he thought it prudent to reaffirm New Zealand's loyalty to the League.<sup>128</sup> Nor was he impressed by complaints about the insufficiency of the Dominion's representation at Geneva. Labour MPs were unhappy that the government had reduced the High Commissioner's salary and the expenses of the delegation to the League as part of its economy campaign.<sup>129</sup> In 1934, the new Leader of the Opposition, M.J. Savage, suggested the New Zealand delegates must have walked to Geneva because their expenses were so small.<sup>130</sup> On both points, Forbes chose to ignore the critics, and Parr led his small delegation to Geneva in September 1934 with instructions to continue to press for a reduction in New Zealand's contribution.<sup>131</sup>

Noting his government's grave dissatisfaction with the continuing problem of arrears, Parr called for the Financial Regulations or the Covenant to be changed to allow the League to deal with offenders. He urged that any arrears which were collected should be used to relieve

those members whose obligations had increased because of the default of others.<sup>132</sup> New Zealand was not, however, among those states which benefited from the reduction in the size of contributions in 1934 which resulted from the League's improving financial position.

Despite Parr's strong words, there is some indication that the government's determination to pursue the issue was beginning to wane. Perhaps there was a realisation that New Zealand had made its point and to continue the campaign could be counter-productive. In September 1935, Forbes advised Parr not to make a public application for a reduction of the Dominion's contribution but only to take "such discreet steps as you think desirable."<sup>133</sup> It is also possible that the government accepted that changes were taking place and the League was making an effort to reduce expenditure. In his report to Avenol in April 1935, Wilson said that the economies which were being made had been noted and were appreciated by the government.<sup>134</sup> At the Assembly later that year, the New Zealand delegation certainly maintained a much lower profile than previously. Parr considered that his task now lay in ensuring the other delegates did not return to their former extravagant ways.<sup>135</sup>

The fact that New Zealand continued to press for spending cuts while the League was preoccupied with the Sino-Japanese dispute and the Disarmament Conference, gives a good indication of how the government's attitude to the League shaped its priorities. The failure to resolve the Manchurian crisis or achieve a general disarmament treaty only confirmed the government's view that the League had little influence on international events, was irrelevant to the Dominion, and an unreasonable

financial burden on its more distant members. Because of its lower expectations, the government did not share the intense disappointment of the League's supporters in New Zealand in the wake of the organisation's failures.

The Labour Party was strongly critical of the government's disinclination to support the League actively. Condemning the Dominion's apparent lack of interest in international affairs generally, Savage said on 7 August 1934: "We want to hang outside the world. We want to be straphangers, but we will get a rude awakening some day."<sup>136</sup> But if there was concern among League supporters about the damage recent events had done to its ability to stabilize the international situation, this did not mean they saw Germany, Japan, or any other power as a threat to peace in the immediate future.<sup>137</sup>

The government seemed to subscribe to this view also because there was little urgency about its policy of rebuilding the Dominion's defence forces.<sup>138</sup> This was despite the fact that Forbes' adviser on international affairs was greatly worried by Germany's growing restiveness and the League's impotence in the face of Japanese aggression. In a comprehensive review of the international situation prepared in early 1935, Berendsen warned that "unless...some means is found of diverting the present current of German policies they spell the doom of the preservation of peace by conciliation and negotiation..." He declared that the Manchurian dispute had been "a grievous blow to the authority of the League and to the efficacy of its peace system, and may well prove to have been a major disaster to the world."

The League's failures had shown that it was out of the question for any country to rely entirely on the Covenant for its security. This realisation had resulted in worldwide rearmament and the formation of military alliances. Berendsen had little confidence that the many problems now facing the world could be overcome. He thought the international situation was more ominous than it had been at any time since 1914, and that "unless the mere horror of the possibilities should give the nations reason to pause before it is too late, we may be on the threshold of dreadful events."<sup>139</sup> But even Berendsen could not have predicted that a remote corner of Africa would play an important part in the descent into world war.

## REFERENCES

- 1 NZPD, 11 Aug 1930, Vol.225, p.91; Imp Conf 1930, 1st Plenary meeting, 1 Oct 1930, G40:7
- 2 On the Manchurian crisis see Thorne, C. The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972
- 3 On the League's response to the crisis see Walters, Chapter 40; Scott, Chapter 11; Northedge, Chapter 7. Also Condliffe. Auto-biography 1891-1969. II, pp.8-9
- 4 Milner, I.F.G. New Zealand's Interests and Policies in the Far East. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1939, pp.16,23,35,46; Dominion, 13 Jun 1932, letter to Editor from J. Gibb(Pres.LNU), PM24:5/2; McGibbon, p.214. Cf. Australia. Andrews, E.M. The Great Temptation: The Australian Government and the Sale of Arms to China during the Manchurian Crisis. Australian Journal of Politics and History. 23.3, Dec 1977, p.347; Aarons, F. What the League of Nations Means to Australia. In Australian Policies, Political and Strategic. Australian Supplementary Papers D.1-4. Sydney: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1938, pp.3-4,7; also Carter, pp.147-148
- 5 Lissington. New Zealand..., p.78; Walters, p.470; McGibbon, p.212
- 6 SSDA to GGNZ, 22 Sep 1931, EA1:264/2/7(1)
- 7 McGibbon, p.215
- 8 Milner, pp.49-50; McKinlay, A.D. The New Zealand Metropolitan Press. Pacific Affairs. 6.1, Jan 1933, pp.2-3,12ff; Attwood, pp.68,70
- 9 Wanganui Herald, 29 Mar 1932, PM24:5/2; NZ Herald, 27 Aug 1932, EA1:268/2/11(5); Lissington. New Zealand..., pp.80-81
- 10 Milner, p.50; S.G. Chapman(Pres.YWCA) to Forbes, 3 May 1932, EA1:264/2/7(6); Scott, p.222
- 11 Auckland Weekly News, 3 Feb 1932; NZ Herald, 3 Feb 1932, quoted in Lissington. New Zealand..., p.80
- 12 Christchurch Sun, 22 Feb 1932, PM24:5/2
- 13 Otago Daily Times, 4 Feb 1932, quoted in Lissington. New Zealand..., p.79
- 14 Ibid, p.79; Wanganui Chronicle, 29 Mar 1932, PM24:5/2



- 15 Wilford to Forbes, 24 Feb 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 16 Walters, p.487
- 17 NZPD, 24 Feb 1932, Vol.231, p.5; cf. Australian Government. Andrews. The Great Temptation..., p.347; also Carter, pp.154-155
- 18 Forbes to Wilford, 23 Feb 1932, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 19 H. Patteson(British Consul, Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart(Perm.U-SS, FO), 4 Mar 1932, DBFP. 2nd Series. IX. Butler, R., Dakin, D. & Lambert, M.E.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965, pp. 712-713
- 20 McGibbon, pp.219-220; Thorne, p.299. See NZPD, 4 Oct 1932, Vol.233, pp.230-231
- 21 Wilford to Forbes, 5 Jul 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2); Knowles to Berendsen, 24 Mar 1932, EA1:264/2/7(5)
- 22 NZ Delegate's Report on Special Assembly, 30 Mar 1932, p.4, EA2: 114/3/2(5); see Christchurch Times, 9 Mar 1932, PM24:5/2
- 23 Scott, pp.227-229
- 24 Report on Special Assembly, p.10, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 25 Berendsen to Knowles, 20 Apr 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2); Berendsen to Knowles, 4 May 1932, EA1:264/2/7(6)
- 26 Scott, pp.229-230
- 27 Attwood, pp.69-71; M.E.P. Ahern(Sec.Dom.Council,LNU) to Forbes, 27 Jun 1932, EA1:264/2/7(7)
- 28 Memo by Sir J. Simon, 19 Nov 1932, DBFP. 2nd Series. XI. Medlicott, Dakin & Lambert(eds). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970, pp.68-72
- 29 Vansittart to Patteson, 23 Nov 1932; P.A. Clutterbuck(DO) to C.W. Orde(FO), 24,25 Nov 1932, DBFP. 2nd Series. XI, pp.74,80-81,84-85
- 30 Wilford to PMD, 11 Nov 1932, EA2:114/2/2(1); McGibbon, p.194
- 31 Record of Conversation on Nov 28 between Sir T. Wilford and Sir V. Wellesley, 29 Nov 1932, DBFP. 2nd Series. XI, pp.97-101
- 32 Cf. Canadian response. Skelton to Riddell, 24 Dec 1932, 7 Jan 1933, DCER. V. Ottawa: Department of External Relations, 1973, pp.324-328; Veatch, Chapter 9
- 33 See Wilford to Forbes, 30 Dec 1932, EA1:264/2/7(9); also Carter, pp. 157-163

- 34 Scott, pp.233-235
- 35 Wilford to Forbes, 3 Mar 1933, EA1:264/2/7(10)
- 36 Scott, pp.236-239
- 37 Press, 26 Aug 1933; Maitava Ensign, 29 Aug 1933; Northern Advocate, 30 Aug 1933, PM24:5/2
- 38 NZ Herald, 28 Mar 1933; Dominion, 29 Mar 1933, PM24:5/2; see Carter, p.165
- 39 Press, 30 Mar 1933, PM24:5/2
- 40 Rotorua Morning Post, 30 Aug 1933; Maitava Ensign, 29 Aug 1933, PM24:5/2
- 41 Milner, p.52; cf. Australia. Carter, pp.155-156
- 42 Dominion, 1 Nov 1933, PM24:5/2; Attwood, p.70
- 43 Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, pp.9-10, EA2:114/8/3(1). Cf. Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1932. London: Oxford University Press, 1933, pp.532-533
- 44 NZPD, 2 Mar 1932, Vol.231, p.142; 3 Mar 1932, p.172; 9 Mar 1932, p.321; 30 Sep 1932, Vol.233, p.173; 21 Nov 1933, Vol.237, pp.423-425, 432-433
- 45 NZPD, 28 Feb 1933, Vol.235, p.770; cf. Australian Government. Andrews. The Great Temptation..., p.347
- 46 Hankey to R. MacDonald(British PM), Dec 1934, (PRO Premier 1/174) Misc 16; see Memo by Sir J. Pratt(FO), 12 Jan 1933, DBFP. 2nd Series. XI, pp.227-228
- 47 Commonwealth PMs Conf 1935, 3rd meeting, 9 May 1935, EA11:53; also McGibbon, p.241 n.48
- 48 NZPD, 27 Jun 1929, Vol.221, p.2
- 49 GGNZ to SSDA, 16 Jul 1929, G48:N/35
- 50 On 1930 London Naval Conference see McGibbon, pp.190ff
- 51 Imp Conf 1930, NZ Delegates Brief 2.A.4. Section on Disarmament & Appendix 1, EA11:37
- 52 'Disarmament Conference', memo by Berendsen, Oct 1931, EA2:111/12/18 (1). See Report on 11th Assembly, pp.49-50, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 53 Imp Conf 1930, Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament, 3rd meeting, 17 Oct 1930; 7th meeting, 23 Oct 1930, EA11:35; E40. Cmte on Arbitration & Disarmament. Report, pp.5-7, G40:6

- 54 SSDA to GGNZ, 9 Feb 1931, EA2:111/12/15(1)
- 55 GGNZ to SSDA, 17 Feb 1931, EA2:111/12/15(1)
- 56 London Naval Conf 1930, Meetings of Commonwealth Delegates, 2nd meeting, 28 Jan 1930; 3rd meeting, 31 Jan 1930; 5th meeting, 6 Feb 1930, EA2:111/17/5(1)
- 57 Forbes to Berendsen, 8 Apr 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1)
- 58 SSDA to GGNZ, 10 Aug 1931; GGNZ to SSDA, 24 Aug 1931, EA2:111/12/15(1)
- 59 Forbes to Wilford, 13 May 1931, EA1:111/12/16(1); see J.T.V. Webster (Navy Office) to Berendsen, 10 Aug 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1)
- 60 NZPD, 14 Aug 1931, Vol.229, p.301
- 61 Eg. NZPD, 31 Jul 1929, Vol.221, pp.782-818
- 62 Grant, p.26
- 63 NZPD, 15 Aug 1930, Vol.225, pp.303-308
- 64 Labour MP Rev. Clyde Carr circulated it in Parliament. NZPD, 18 Aug 1931, Vol.229, p.343
- 65 Grant, p.26; Attwood, pp.54-58; Sharpe, p.110; Otago Daily Times, 15 Nov 1930, EA2:114/4/5(1); see file EA1:111/12/17(1). On Canadian petition see Veatch, pp.62-63
- 66 Address by Forbes, Wellington Town Hall, 5 Oct 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1)
- 67 Sec-Gen to PMNZ, 17 Feb 1931, N1:22/10/3
- 68 See McIntyre, W.D. New Zealand Prepares for War: Defence Policy 1919-39. Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, 1988, pp. 100-119; cf. Australia. Hudson, W.J., p.102
- 69 'Disarmament Conference', Oct 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1); see Forbes to Wilford, 1 Jul 1931, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 70 Berendsen to F. Matthews(Cobbe's Pvte.Sec.), 13 May 1932, EA1: 111/12/18(2)
- 71 Forbes to SSExt.Affairs, Canada, 28 Jul 1931, EA2:111/12/15(1); Forbes to Wilford, 1 Aug 1931, N1:22/10/3; Forbes to Cobbe, 16 Apr 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1). See statements of other Dominions. Min.Ext. Affairs, Sth Africa to Forbes, 19 Aug 1931; SSExt.Affairs, Canada to Forbes, 1 Sep 1931; Min.Ext.Affairs, IFS to Forbes, 22 Sep 1931, EA2:111/12/15(1); PM, Aust. to Forbes, 3 Nov 1931, EA2:111/12/15(2)
- 72 Webster to Berendsen, 6 Aug 1931; J.S.G. Fraser(Naval Board) to Cobbe, 9 Nov 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1). See file N1:22/10/3

- 73 Wilford to PMD, 3 Sep 1931; Wilford to Forbes, 23 Nov 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1)
- 74 Knowles to Berendsen, 30 Jun 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 75 Berendsen to GOC, NZ Military Forces, 4 Sep 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1)
- 76 The Labour Party was unhappy with the choice of Wilford because he was considered unsympathetic to disarmament. NZPD, 3 Nov 1931, Vol. 230, pp.690-691
- 77 Forbes to Wilford, 14 Nov 1931; Wilford to PMD, 29 Dec 1931, EA2:111/12/18(1); Knowles to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1931, EA2:114/3/2(4); Wilford to Forbes, 14 Jun, 23 Sep 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 78 Berendsen to Knowles, 20 Apr 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2). On the Disarmament Conference see Walters, Chapters 41 & 44; Scott, Chapter 13; Northedge, pp.122-136; Noel-Baker, P. The First World Disarmament Conference 1932-1933 and Why It Failed. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979
- 79 Walters, pp.502ff; Scott, pp.263ff
- 80 Wilford to Forbes, 24 Feb 1932; see GGNZ to SSDA, 5 Jun 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 81 NZPD, 25 Jun 1931, Vol.228, p.2; Berendsen to Knowles, 20 Apr 1932; Forbes to Wilford, 20 May 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 82 Berendsen to Knowles, 21 Jul 1932, EA1:311/3/6(3)
- 83 GGNZ to SSDA, 5 Jun, 2 Jul 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2); Walters, pp.509-510; Scott, pp.265-268; see Wilford to Forbes, 5 Jul 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 84 Wilford to Forbes, 23 Sep 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2); Walters, pp.511-512
- 85 Knowles to Berendsen, 27 Jul 1932; Berendsen to Knowles, 22 Sep 1932, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 86 GGNZ to SSDA, 15 Nov 1932, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 87 Thomson to Forbes, 6 Feb 1934; Forbes to Thomson, 7 Feb 1934, EA1:111/12/18(2); see Walters, p.551; Scott, p.292
- 88 Knowles to Berendsen, 31 Jan 1935, EA1:111/12/18(2). Wilson believed that disarmament was not taken very seriously in New Zealand. Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, p.8, EA2:114/8/3(1)
- 89 Parr to PMD, 25 May 1934, EA1:111/12/18(2)
- 90 Walters, pp.553-555

- 91 Lissington. New Zealand..., p.87
- 92 Attwood, pp.55,73-80; Grant, pp.27-44; see 'Force and the League of Nations'. Presidential Address by Dr R.R.D. Milligan to Christchurch LNU, 20 Mar 1935, Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs. For Wilson's assessment of NZLNU see Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, pp.13-14, EA2:114/8/3(1)
- 93 NZPD, 11 Aug 1930, Vol.225, p.91
- 94 NZPD, 10 Jul 1929, Vol.221, pp.266-268; 6 Nov 1929, Vol.223, pp.1268-1269. The New Zealand delegation included: A.H. Tocker(Prof. Economics, Cant.Univ.College), Government delegate; T.S. Weston (Pres.Employers Fed.), Employers' delegate; and J. Roberts(Sec.NZ Alliance of Labour), Workers' delegate. See Thorn, p.76
- 95 NZPD, 15 Jul 1930, Vol.224, p.265; 20 Mar 1931, Vol.227, pp.371,428-430
- 96 Report on 11th Assembly, pp.56-57,69, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 97 Sec.Treasury to Thomson, 21,22 Apr 1931; Forbes to Sec-Gen, 5 Sep 1931, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 98 NZPD, 28 Sep 1932, Vol.233, p.60; Berendsen to Sec.Treasury, 19 Dec 1933; Dominion, 9 Aug 1934, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 99 Forbes to Wilford, 1 Jul 1931, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 100 LNOJ. SS93. 12th Assembly. 6th Plenary meeting, 10 Sep 1931, p.65
- 101 NZ Delegate's Report on 12th Assembly, 10 Dec 1931, p.7, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 102 Ibid, pp.53-54; LNOJ. SS97. 12th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 2nd meeting, 12 Sep 1931, pp.9-10; 3rd meeting, 14 Sep 1931, p.11; 4th meeting, 15 Sep 1931, p.19
- 103 Berendsen to Knowles, 21 Jul 1932, EA1:311/3/6(3); Forbes to Wilford, 21 Jul 1932, EA2:114/2/2(1); Berendsen to Knowles, 31 Jan 1933, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 104 NZPD, 3 Nov 1931, Vol.230, pp.690-691; S. Saunders Page(Asst.Sec, No More War Movement) to Forbes, 5 Oct 1931, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 105 Dunedin Evening Star, 16 Sep 1931, EA2:114/7/2(1); McKinlay, pp.5-6
- 106 Sec.Treasury to Berendsen, 6 Jan 1932, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 107 Berendsen to Sec.Economy Commission, 22 Mar 1932; also Berendsen to Sec.Treasury, 13 Jan 1932, EA2:114/7/2(1); file T1:52/702
- 108 Report of the National Expenditure Commission. 1 Jul 1932, AJHR. 1932, B-4A, p.21; NZPD, 11 Oct 1932, Vol.233, p.422; 12 Oct 1932, p.497

- 109 Forbes to Wilford, 21 Jul 1932, EA2:114/2/2(1); Berendsen to Knowles, 21 Jul 1932, EA1:311/3/6(3); see Berendsen to Knowles, 16 Dec 1932, EA2:114/2/2(1); Cecil, p.251
- 110 Forbes to Coates, 4 Aug 1932; Coates to PMD, 19 Aug 1932, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 111 LNOJ. SS107. 13th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 4th meeting, 1 Oct 1932, pp. 28-29; NZ Delegate's Report on 13th Assembly, 21 Nov 1932, pp.18-19, EA2:114/3/2(5); also Knowles to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1931, EA2:114/3/2(4)
- 112 LNOJ. SS107. 13th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 10th meeting, 6 Oct 1932, p. 65; 11th meeting, 10 Oct 1932, pp.73-74; Report on 13th Assembly, pp.15-16,18-20, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 113 Wilford to Forbes, 17 Nov 1932, EA2:114/7/2(1); Report on 13th Assembly, p.21, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 114 NZPD, 3 Nov 1931, Vol.230, pp.690-691; 27 Sep 1932, Vol.233, p.45; 4 Nov 1932, Vol.234, p.170; 1 Dec 1933, Vol.237, p.661
- 115 Lyons to Forbes, 27 Feb, 12 Jul 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 116 Forbes to Lyons, 8 Mar 1933; Coates to Lyons, 27 Jul 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 117 Monetary and Economic Conference: Statement by PM. AJHR. 1933, A-6; LN. Journal of the Monetary and Economic Conference. London, 1933; Coates Papers 1785:59; file T1:52/731. See Walters, Chapter 42; Northedge, pp.172-174
- 118 NZPD, 21 Sep 1933, Vol.236, pp.1-2. The New Zealand delegation included Forbes, R. Masters(Min.Industries & Commerce), G.C. Rodda (Asst.Sec.Treasury), Prof. A.H. Tocker(Cant.Univ.College), Dr R.M. Campbell(Coates' Economic Adviser), and C.A. Jeffery(PM's Pvte.Sec). See NZPD, 27 Sep 1933, Vol.236, p.87
- 119 Wilford to Coates, 2 Aug 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 120 NZPD, 26 Sep 1934, Vol.240, p.152
- 121 Wilford to Coates, 2 Aug 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 122 Coates to Wilford, 10 Aug 1933, EA2:114/2/2(1); Coates to Wilford, 18 Sep 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 123 LNOJ. SS118. 14th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 28 Sep 1933, p. 21; 12th meeting, 9 Oct 1933, pp.87-88; Report on 14th Assembly, p.28, EA2:114/3/2(5)
- 124 Skelton to R.J. Manion(Canadian 1st Delegate), 31 Aug 1933, DCER. V, pp.233-234

- 125 Rangitikei Advocate, 5 Oct 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 126 Christchurch Sun, 2 Dec 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 127 NZ Herald, 11 Nov 1933, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 128 NZPD, 1 Dec 1933, Vol.237, pp.661-662
- 129 See *ibid*, 28 Nov 1933, p.542
- 130 NZPD, 26 Sep 1934, Vol.240, p.151
- 131 Forbes to Parr, 21 Jun 1934, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 132 LNOJ. SS128. 15th Assembly. 4th Cmte, 3rd meeting, 13 Sep 1934, p. 17; 9th meeting, 24 Sep 1934, p.53
- 133 Forbes to Parr, 3 Sep 1935, EA2:114/7/2(1)
- 134 Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, p.8. EA2:114/8/3(1)
- 135 NZ Delegate's Report on 16th Assembly, 21 Dec 1935, pp.49-51, EA2: 114/3/2(6)
- 136 NZPD, 7 Aug 1934, Vol.239, pp.7-15
- 137 NZPD, 5 Oct 1933, Vol.236, pp.295-296; 21 Nov 1933, Vol.237, pp.432-433; 26 Sep 1934, Vol.240, p.154; Grant, p.44
- 138 McGibbon, pp.242ff
- 139 'Notes on the International Situation for the PM's Information: International Situation Generally and the League of Nations', memo by Berendsen, nd(c.Mar 1935), pp.1-3,15,19, EA1:101/1/4(1)

## CHAPTER 7

## THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT, 1935-1938

In Parliament on 19 February 1935, Forbes declared that if Britain was involved in war, New Zealand would be involved also.<sup>1</sup> This statement reveals that, despite its domestic preoccupations, the government was becoming concerned about the unsettled international situation and the possibility of war with the increasingly belligerent Fascist powers. Because such a conflict was expected to take place in Europe or the Far East, the dispute between Italy and Ethiopia three months earlier had not rung any alarm bells in Wellington.

Fighting broke out between the two countries in December 1934 at the oasis of Wal-Wal, where the border between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland was unmarked. There had been border incidents before but Mussolini sought to exploit the clash at Wal-Wal as a pretext for the invasion of Ethiopia which he had been planning for over a year. Since seizing power in 1922, Mussolini had never concealed his ambition of wanting to extend Italy's colonial empire. From the mid-1920s, the Italians had stepped up their economic activities in Ethiopia. It was a tempting prize, not only because it lay between the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland but because Mussolini was determined to avenge the Ethiopian defeat of the Italian attempt to conquer the country in 1896.<sup>2</sup> The Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie, appealed to the League, and Britain and France tried to find a solution to the dispute during



1935. Unwilling to alienate a potential ally in Europe, they pressed Ethiopia to offer substantial territorial and economic concessions to Italy but Mussolini was not satisfied. With the negotiations stalemated, the British Cabinet reluctantly came to the conclusion that should Ethiopia be attacked, the League would have to implement sanctions against Italy.<sup>3</sup>

The New Zealand Government was kept apprised of these developments but made no comment on them. When the Commonwealth Prime Ministers met in London for the Silver Jubilee in April 1935, the Australian and Canadian leaders expressed their concern about the implications of the dispute for the Commonwealth. Forbes preferred to focus his attention on the Far East.<sup>4</sup> At home, the government was as reluctant as ever to make any statements on foreign affairs. This reticence was reinforced on Forbes' return by the strong criticism he received because of his statement in Canada that there would be no need to call Parliament before committing New Zealand to a war involving Britain.

The peace groups, the Labour Party and even the Returned Services Association objected to such unquestioning loyalty to the British Government.<sup>5</sup> The Leader of the Opposition, Michael Joseph Savage, stated: "Our youth should not be sacrificed for unknown causes and unknown policies and without reference to the representatives of the people."<sup>6</sup> This attitude predominated when it seemed likely that war would result from the Ethiopian dispute. Although few New Zealanders were outright pacifists, many had been sufficiently influenced by the peace campaigners in Britain and New Zealand to question the necessity of sending the

Dominion's armed forces to fight in a foreign war. The fact that such a war might be sanctioned by the League of Nations made it no more acceptable.

The New Zealand press devoted much attention to the Ethiopian situation from June 1935.<sup>7</sup> Popular sympathy was with the Ethiopians, who, as Coates put it, were "simple, unarmed, primitive people" being threatened by "that great bully Mussolini".<sup>8</sup> The possible international ramifications of the dispute were not overlooked, however, particularly as they affected the League. There was a growing awareness that the League would have to act firmly if the Manchurian debacle was not to be repeated.<sup>9</sup> In early August 1935, a LNU deputation called on acting Prime Minister Sir Alfred Ransom to support the League publicly and to give an assurance that the Dominion would carry out its obligations under the Covenant. Ransom was extremely reluctant to make any public statement of the government's views. "This question was one of vital importance to the world," he said, "and there should be no fear that any utterance on the part of this Government could be misunderstood."<sup>10</sup>

Although some Labour MPs urged the government to condemn Italy's actions, the Labour Party tended to share the government's cautious attitude initially.<sup>11</sup> But the Coalition's failure to give any lead to public opinion provoked some criticism. The Evening Post complained on 17 September 1935 that "neither the Prime Minister nor any other Minister able to speak with the authority of the Government has seen fit to make a public and considered declaration of New Zealand's attitude to the crisis confronting the League of Nations."<sup>12</sup>

Privately, however, the government was giving close attention to the dispute. Berendsen told J.V. Wilson that there was a growing realisation that if the League's collective action failed this time, even New Zealand would be affected.<sup>13</sup> In London, British ministers met with the Dominion High Commissioners to inform them of the British Government's position.<sup>14</sup> They were told that it was vital for the League's prestige and the peace of Europe to prevent war in Ethiopia. But if war did break out there was little confidence that the League could enforce collective sanctions against Italy. Should collective action prove impossible, the British Government would not support the implementation of sanctions by a few states only. The British aim would then be to keep Italy in the League, believing it would be better to keep the League alive rather than destroying it.<sup>15</sup> Parr told Forbes that he agreed with the British policy though he had reservations about supporting collective sanctions at the Assembly. He and Australian High Commissioner Stanley Bruce believed sanctions might be ineffective but have the result of widening the conflict. On the other hand, Parr conceded, taking no action at all would be fatal for the League.<sup>16</sup>

Forbes was aware that as a consequence of its recent failures, the League's response to the dispute would probably be the final test for a peace structure based on the Covenant.<sup>17</sup> This knowledge did not instil in him any enthusiasm for involving New Zealand in the dispute. He dutifully informed the British Government that the Dominion was prepared to support Britain and honour its obligations under the Covenant.<sup>18</sup> But in a confidential note to Parr, Forbes wrote:

We should be most reluctant unless this becomes clearly necessary to participate in any degree in a quarrel which does not directly

concern the British Commonwealth of Nations. We would oppose any attempt to apply economic sanctions unless associated with a general and effective application by all other Members of the League. In particular we are confident that public opinion in New Zealand would not endorse any measure that might call for the application of force.<sup>19</sup>

This view was shared by all the Dominions. At a meeting in Geneva before the 1935 Assembly, the South African and Australian delegates even advocated expelling Ethiopia from the League and offering it as a mandate to Italy.<sup>20</sup> Patently, the Dominions had already accepted that if the Italians were determined to occupy Ethiopia there was little the League could do about it.

To the surprise of many of the League delegates, the British Foreign Secretary's speech to the Assembly contained a clear and firm declaration of Britain's resolve to support the League and the "steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression".<sup>21</sup> In fact, Sir Samuel Hoare's publicly-expressed loyalty to the League was quite suspect and it is probable the forthcoming British general election played an important part in determining the tenor of his speech.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Britain had given a lead and the other delegates echoed Hoare's stand.<sup>23</sup> New Zealand's view, expressed by Parr on 14 September 1935, was that the Ethiopian dispute was the supreme test for the League. He acknowledged that New Zealand was not affected materially by the dispute but he said that the Dominion was tremendously concerned with the sanctity of international agreements. "We feel that, if solemn pacts and covenants are to be broken with impunity, none of us - least of all any of the small nations - is for a moment safe." Thus New Zealand fully supported the British declaration and would accept the obligations it implied, so long as they were collective.<sup>24</sup>

Forbes may have preferred to have said nothing at the Assembly but, as Parr explained, it would have been unwise for New Zealand not to have expressed its support for the League.<sup>25</sup> Just as importantly, Parr's speech reflected a greater confidence on his part in the League's capacity to resolve the matter. When Bruce suggested at a Commonwealth delegates' meeting three days later that almost anything was preferable to sanctions, Parr took him to task. Was Bruce prepared to let Mussolini attack Ethiopia with impunity, he asked.<sup>26</sup> Clearly, Parr now accepted that the League must impose sanctions if Italy invaded Ethiopia. Indeed, at a further meeting of the Commonwealth delegates on 26 September 1935, he even advocated closing the Suez Canal in the event of war.<sup>27</sup> Made almost certainly without Forbes' knowledge, this suggestion received no support from the British ministers. Their goal, above all else, was to give Italy no excuse for a 'mad-dog' attack on British forces in the Mediterranean.<sup>28</sup>

The Council made one more attempt at mediation but Parr considered it a hopeless task. He thought that nothing more could be done until war broke out. Only then could the League contemplate sanctions.<sup>29</sup> In New Zealand, opinion was divided on the subject. The Communists, some trade unions, churches and pacifists feared that economic sanctions would lead inevitably to military sanctions, and they were not prepared to support what they regarded as an imperialist conflict.<sup>30</sup> Others argued that Ethiopia was simply not important enough for the Commonwealth to risk war with Italy.<sup>31</sup>

The Labour Party and the LNU, on the other hand, saw the dispute as

a test case for collective security.<sup>32</sup> The Labour leaders believed the world must choose between right or might. They considered it useless to cloud the issue with arguments about imperialism.<sup>33</sup> Fraser described the pacifist stand as the "essence of weakness" because it meant not only the betrayal of Ethiopia but of the League itself.<sup>34</sup> It was hoped economic sanctions would be sufficient but there was an acceptance, albeit reluctant, that New Zealand might have to fight for the League. Nash said that if the Commonwealth was drawn into a war with Italy, "New Zealanders should not be led into it with emotional hatred and shouting but should fight in sorrow for the good of the future."<sup>35</sup>

The Italian army invaded Ethiopia on 3 October 1935. After a meeting with the Foreign Secretary, Parr advised Forbes that the British Government would follow a policy of caution and would not consider military sanctions unless Italy attacked other countries.<sup>36</sup> Parr was obviously disappointed by the British attitude because he said he was not convinced that economic sanctions would be universal or effective.<sup>37</sup> But Forbes made it clear New Zealand regarded any form of sanction as a serious step and the government must be consulted before any vote was taken.<sup>38</sup> On 10 October 1935, the Assembly resolved that Article 16 of the Covenant must be invoked against Italy. A Sanctions Co-ordination Committee, comprising representatives from all the League members, was immediately established. Within a few days, agreement had been reached on prohibiting the export to Italy of arms, raw materials such as rubber, tin and other metals; banning all loans or credits to the Italians; and an embargo on all imports from Italy. Member-states were requested to implement these measures as quickly as possible.<sup>39</sup>

Forbes was taken aback by the speed of the League's action.<sup>40</sup> But in collaboration with the Opposition, legislation was drafted and the League of Nations Sanctions (Enforcement in New Zealand) Bill was presented to Parliament on 23 October 1935.<sup>41</sup> Forbes acknowledged that the Dominion's participation would have little impact on the success or failure of the League's action. Nonetheless, New Zealand must honour its obligations although he was hopeful that war could be avoided.<sup>42</sup> Savage shared this hope. Indeed, the Labour Party was so determined that the government should not be able to involve New Zealand in a war which might result from the measures in the Bill, without first consulting the people of the Dominion, that it insisted on a clause preventing the introduction of conscription and the sending of New Zealand's armed forces overseas.<sup>43</sup> Although some Government MPs questioned the need for the clause, Parliament unanimously accepted the Bill.<sup>44</sup> The government's action seems to have had the approval of most interested New Zealanders.<sup>45</sup>

Whatever doubts some of the Dominions may have had about sanctions, all accepted the League's decision.<sup>46</sup> In fact, it was the Canadian representative who took the lead in calling for an embargo on iron, steel, coke, coal and, most importantly, oil.<sup>47</sup> Thus the British Cabinet's decision, on 2 December 1935, to postpone the commencement of these more serious measures while Hoare negotiated an agreement in Paris to end the war, dismayed some of the Dominion High Commissioners. At their meeting with Hoare on 5 December 1935, Parr suggested that the recently-elected Labour Government in New Zealand would not take kindly to any proposals which undermined the League. Only Bruce supported the Foreign Secretary.

Three days later the terms of the secret agreement reached with French Premier Pierre Laval leaked out. The Hoare-Laval Plan required Ethiopia to cede a large area in the north-east to Italy and to give the Italians almost unlimited rights over the southern half of the country.

At a meeting with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Malcolm MacDonald, on 10 December 1935, all the Dominion High Commissioners except Bruce expressed alarm about the effect of the plan on public opinion in their respective countries.<sup>48</sup> In New Zealand the proposals produced a reaction of almost universal disillusionment. Berendsen later told Ben Cockram of the Dominions Office that the plan had come as an "absolute bombshell".<sup>49</sup> The Press charged that Britain and France had invited Ethiopia "to accept a settlement which is in some way a more flagrant violation of the League Covenant than the settlement effected in Manchuria after the Japanese invasion."<sup>50</sup> The LNU urged the government to condemn the plan and to declare that sanctions should continue until Italy accepted a League settlement. Not surprisingly, this vigorous policy aroused dissension among pacifist and conservative members who doubted the League's ability to enforce peace, and some of them withdrew from the LNU.<sup>51</sup>

The Labour Government which took office on 6 December 1935, had been elected on a platform which included a foreign policy reflecting the Party's internationalism. Labour's manifesto promised a policy designed to seek international economic co-operation and to promote disarmament and world peace. Most importantly, Labour committed itself to do everything within its power to advance the idea of international



co-operation through the League of Nations.<sup>52</sup> When the new government was informed of the terms of the Hoare-Laval Plan by the British on 10 December 1935, the Prime Minister was confronted with an unexpectedly early test of Labour's loyalty to those principles. On 13 December 1935, Savage replied politely but firmly that while his government appreciated the difficulty of the situation they very much regretted that they were quite unable to associate themselves with the proposals.<sup>53</sup> Although Savage later agreed not to make his objection public, it was an important indication of Labour's willingness to adopt a position independent of that of the British Government.<sup>54</sup> South Africa also protested but the other Dominions did not.<sup>55</sup> In the ensuing fuss in Britain, Hoare was forced to resign and was replaced as Foreign Secretary by Anthony Eden.

What Parr mildly called the "precipitate and unwise action" of the British and French Governments had a devastating effect on the League.<sup>56</sup> It proved impossible to recapture the impetus and confidence of the previous deliberations of the Co-ordination Committee. The question of tougher measures was put off because there was no longer any guarantee of collective action. "In the meantime," cabled Parr on 24 December 1935, "soft pedal to be keynote to League's action."<sup>57</sup> It was not until the Italians began their conquest of Ethiopia in earnest from February 1936 that any further consideration was given to an oil embargo. In several meetings with the Dominion High Commissioners, Eden stated that Britain would support sanctions on oil but it would not take the initiative on the matter.<sup>58</sup> The tentativeness of the British approach convinced Parr that there was little hope of the League taking stronger

action against Italy. He saw no point in declaring New Zealand's support for further sanctions, though he strenuously resisted any suggestion that the existing sanctions should be lifted.<sup>59</sup>

While the League considered its next move, the Italian forces quickly defeated the Ethiopians. On 6 May 1936, Mussolini announced the annexation of Ethiopia and three days later the King of Italy assumed the title of Emperor. It was a grievous blow to the League. With the continuation of sanctions seemingly futile, many states wanted them dropped as soon as possible. At a meeting of the Dominion High Commissioners with MacDonald on 6 May 1936, Canada and Australia were already advocating this course.<sup>60</sup> But Parr and the others thought it too soon and favoured continuing sanctions until the situation became clearer.<sup>61</sup> The New Zealand Government agreed.<sup>62</sup> Parr noted, however, that the divisive effect of the issue on British opinion and the Dominions was making the British Government's position very difficult.<sup>63</sup>

More seriously, the humiliating defeat of the League had led to questions about its structure and whether the Covenant needed amending. In particular, the reluctance of many members to contemplate military action or even the full implementation of economic sanctions under the Covenant suggested that the League's survival might be more certain if the sanctions Articles were removed. (The resultant attempt to reform the Covenant is discussed in Chapter 10.) The question was whether collective security was still a viable principle. Parr certainly believed the Ethiopians had been "deluded into grievous disaster" by the League but he put the blame less on the inadequacies of the Covenant

than on the fact that "no nation was prepared to go into war against Italy and [the] Italians knew it."<sup>64</sup>

In New Zealand, the National Party was expressing strong reservations about continuing sanctions and the League's ability to enforce collective security. Speaking in Parliament on 15 May 1936 on the League of Nations Sanctions Regulations Confirmation Bill, the Leader of the Opposition said that sanctions were a farce. Forbes said the idealism of the League's supporters had blinded them to the practical difficulties of the course it had chosen to follow. Sanctions had been designed to prevent Italy going to war but they had had the opposite effect. It was now time to admit failure and abandon sanctions before more damage was done, particularly to Anglo-Italian relations. He stated that the League had been tried as a peacemaker and had been found wanting. Though Forbes thought the League should be replaced, he had no suggestions as to what the replacement should be.<sup>65</sup>

By contrast, the Labour Party had no doubt the League must survive and the Covenant be upheld. Savage defended the idealism behind the League and its actions. He noted that sanctions had had only a few months to prove their effectiveness. The government believed that "the only alternative to the collective peace system is that of despair - to arm as rapidly and completely as possible and prepare for a reversion to the barbarous days of war."<sup>66</sup> While focussing more on the practical difficulties of the situation, John A. Lee and other Labour MPs also affirmed their support for the League. Blaming the Great Powers for failing to give a lead against Italy, they advocated the reconstruction

of the League to give it the power to enforce sanctions against aggressors.<sup>67</sup> National's Keith Holyoake warned the government against outrunning public opinion,<sup>68</sup> but unlike the governments of Australia, Canada and Britain, the New Zealand Government faced little overt opposition to the direction of its foreign policy. Given a clear lead, most New Zealanders were content to allow Labour to pursue its strongly pro-League policy.

The situation was less clear-cut for the British Government. The Dominion High Commissioners were told on 8 June 1936 that Britain would not propose the removal of sanctions at the next Assembly but nor would it oppose removal if the majority of members were in favour.<sup>69</sup> Parr considered this a weak attitude in view of Britain's past leadership of the sanctions movement.<sup>70</sup> Yet even New Zealand and South Africa had to admit that support for sanctions had collapsed. In his instructions to Parr on 15 June 1936, Savage reiterated his government's support for the League and collective action. He conceded, however, that New Zealand was not directly affected by the dispute and thus could not with propriety oppose the abandonment of sanctions should this be the wish of the majority of League members. Nevertheless, the government would only accept such removal on the condition that the question of the League's future should be considered at the September 1936 Assembly, preferably in consultation with all the nations of the world.<sup>71</sup>

The British learned of New Zealand's views at a meeting between Eden, MacDonald and the Dominion High Commissioners on the following day. Perhaps mindful of the Dominion's traditional desire for imperial

unity, Parr said New Zealand would acquiesce in the removal of sanctions if this was the wish of the majority of Commonwealth members. Closely questioned by the South African High Commissioner on this apparent softening of New Zealand's attitude to sanctions, Parr declared that his government would not oppose the British Government on the question. As a result, MacDonald told the Cabinet on 17 June 1936 that while New Zealand would like sanctions to be continued and increased, it was likely to fall into line with whatever Britain proposed.<sup>72</sup> Whether Parr deliberately misrepresented the government's views is unclear but he certainly believed he had some discretion in carrying out his instructions. He was particularly doubtful whether Savage's condition on accepting the removal of sanctions should be pressed. Parr evidently felt that since sanctions had failed, there was little point in making further difficulties for the British Government and he warned Savage that a maverick image for New Zealand at the June 1936 Assembly might affect the Dominion's bid for the Council in September.<sup>73</sup>

Replying on 1 July 1936, Savage reproved Parr for questioning his instructions. He said that the importance of the issue of the future constitution of the League was such that New Zealand would raise it at the September Assembly regardless of the outcome of the current session. Noting press speculation that the next session might be postponed, Parr was instructed to tell the Assembly that New Zealand deprecated any delay and to point out that one of the League's greatest weaknesses was its tendency to avoid difficult issues.<sup>74</sup> That the government was not prepared to give Parr the discretion he had enjoyed under the previous government suggests that Savage and his colleagues may have

had doubts whether Parr's views fully accorded with their own. The fact that the government had already decided on Parr's successor and was trying to persuade him to retire before the September 1936 Assembly, indicates that the League was regarded as important enough for the Labour Government to want its own man leading the New Zealand delegation to Geneva.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from an expression of New Zealand's profound disappointment at the failure of the League and a declaration of the Dominion's continued loyalty, Parr's speech to the Assembly on 2 July 1936 followed the line of Savage's instructions exactly.<sup>76</sup> New Zealand's stand was well-received in Geneva and Britain.<sup>77</sup> But with only New Zealand and South Africa in favour of continuing sanctions, the decision to lift them from 15 July 1936 was inevitable.<sup>78</sup> The problem which remained was whether the members of the League would recognise Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia. The Assembly did not reaffirm the policy of non-recognition but Ethiopia's position within the League remained unclear. Was an Ethiopian delegation still entitled to a seat at the Assembly and, if so, would Mussolini carry out his threat to leave the League? These questions were to the fore when the Seventeenth Assembly opened on 21 September 1936.

The New Zealand delegation was the strongest it had been for a decade. It included Parr, Berendsen, Knowles, the Liason Officer for Foreign Affairs in London, Sir Cecil Day,<sup>79</sup> and Dr R.M. Campbell. As the High Commissioner's Economic Adviser, Richard Mitchelson Campbell became a very influential adviser to Labour's new representative in

London, and helped shape his strongly pro-League stance. Campbell was born in Maungataupere in 1897 and joined the Education Department in 1914. Appointed private secretary to Coates in 1926, he was awarded a scholarship to London University the following year, where he gained a PhD in Economics. From 1929 until 1931 he was a Commonwealth Harkness Fellow in the United States. In 1931 Campbell returned to New Zealand as private secretary to Coates and in 1935 he was appointed to London. Described as a "quick-silver man", he was almost a one-man overseas diplomatic service for New Zealand, "handling everything from meat quotas to policy at the League of Nations."<sup>80</sup>

The delegation was led by the new High Commissioner, William Joseph Jordan. Born to a poor family in Ramsgate, Kent, in 1879, Jordan had worked in the post office, as a London policeman and a wagon-painter for a haulage firm before emigrating to New Zealand in 1904. After working in rough country jobs, he became a self-employed house painter. During the war he was badly wounded while serving in the army, where he rose to the rank of sergeant major. A Labour Party pioneer, Jordan unsuccessfully contested the Raglan seat in 1919 before becoming MP for Manakau from 1922 until 1936. He was Party President from 1932 to 1933.

A close friend of Savage, the bluff and sociable Jordan was, from a public relations standpoint, an excellent choice to articulate Labour's policy at the League. A Christian Socialist with a background as a Methodist Home Missionary, Jordan took to Geneva a strong, even naive, faith that the world's problems would respond to straightforward human decency and goodwill.<sup>81</sup> Frank Walters, a former Deputy Secretary-



William Jordan

General, described him as "a truly English figure, who might have stepped straight from the ranks of Cromwell's New Model Army, [and who] not infrequently embarrassed the Council by a tendency to quote the Bible and to pour ridicule on the best-accepted euphemisms of diplomacy."<sup>82</sup> Perhaps this fervour explains why his speeches were often strong on ideals but weak on actual solutions. Among contemporary observers, it was believed that Jordan had "little comprehension of the more profound aspects of affairs" but Wilson considered him a shrewd politician.<sup>83</sup>



John A. Lee remarked: "Bill was a Gallup poll politician before Gallup poll was invented. He felt every breeze with his cheek and adjusted his course accordingly."<sup>84</sup>

Jordan had a violent temper and was extremely jealous of his dignity and independence. Alice Massey, the wife of the Canadian High Commissioner, observed that "his shoulders are just covered with chips."<sup>85</sup> Confident he and Savage shared the same views, Jordan resented Wellington's attempts to make him conform to the Cabinet's instructions. His relations with Savage's most influential colleagues, Deputy Prime Minister Fraser and Finance Minister Nash were decidedly cool. In fact, he was regarded as an incompetent administrator by Nash and Berendsen. The latter later commented that those who knew Jordan's many faults and limitations must have been surprised at the unquestionable success of his representation at Geneva.<sup>86</sup>

The Assembly was of special importance to New Zealand because it was seeking the Dominions' seat on the Council. In April 1936, Parr reminded the government that Australia's term would expire in September and that New Zealand was entitled to take its place as the Dominion next in seniority. He said it was vital to maintain the continuity of Dominion representation on the Council because any break would make it difficult to secure the election of a Dominion in the future, and would deprive the British representative of the support which had been so helpful in the past.<sup>87</sup> That the government was already considering New Zealand's candidacy indicates that Labour saw a Council seat as a logical extension of the Dominion's foreign policy based on the Covenant, and an

opportunity to promote its views at the highest international level.<sup>88</sup> It was fortuitous that this opportunity to join the Council coincided with the first New Zealand government to take an active interest in League affairs.<sup>89</sup>

Having confirmed New Zealand's candidature at the June Assembly, Parr began canvassing for support.<sup>90</sup> Although the Dominion's election was almost a foregone conclusion, the fact that an independent New Zealand voice was being heard on the Ethiopian and Covenant reform questions undoubtedly boosted its chances of success. New Zealand was elected to the Council on 28 September 1936 and Jordan duly took his seat on 2 October 1936.<sup>91</sup> Initially, he adopted a cautious attitude, for as he explained to Savage:

It is very evident that ideas and plans cannot be stubbornly adhered to all the while, and I shall guard against any appearance of being unreasonable, as such an action would not only not be well for our Dominion, but it might easily embarrass Britain and our other Dominions.<sup>92</sup>

But his first Council session also shattered some of Jordan's illusions about the League. Writing to Savage afterwards, he said: "To be frank, the spirit of Geneva is somewhat disappointing on account of the lack of candour on the part of some of the Nations...We feel that while Nations are conferring with us in the Council they may be separately conferring with one another..."<sup>93</sup> He quickly learned that the reality of Geneva fell far short of Labour's ideal.

The Ethiopian question caused problems for the Assembly as soon as it opened. The proceedings began in the usual way by setting up a committee to examine and report on the credentials of the delegates.

Normally uncontentious, the deliberations of the Credentials Committee had assumed special significance because of the question whether the credentials of the Ethiopian delegation, issued by a head of state who no longer appeared to possess any authority in his country, were sufficient. In the past the committee had mainly comprised the delegates of small states, but the possible political ramifications of the issue made it difficult to find delegates willing to serve. Unexpectedly, therefore, the committee was composed of a number of leading delegates, including the representatives of Britain, France and the Soviet Union.<sup>94</sup> Even more surprising was the election of Jordan to the committee, on the nomination of the British delegation. Perhaps the fact that New Zealand was about to become a member of the Council had some influence on the decision. The British certainly cannot have assumed New Zealand would support the British and French plan to have the Ethiopian application rejected.

The difficulties facing the committee were revealed by the unprecedented length of its deliberations. Eden and French Foreign Minister Yves Delbos argued strongly against admitting the Ethiopians but the New Zealanders were determined that the League should not condone the results of aggression in this manner. Appalled by the unwillingness of many of the delegates to take a firm stand on the issue, Berendsen asked whether there were any on the committee who denied the clear right of the victim of aggression to be represented at the League's enquiry into that aggression. The debate continued through three meetings of the committee until a consensus was reached on 23 September 1936.<sup>95</sup> Though Jordan later denied press reports that there had been any disagreement

between the British and New Zealand delegates, he believed the New Zealanders had influenced the line taken by the committee in its report.<sup>96</sup> This stated that while there were serious doubts about the status of the Ethiopian delegation, the committee recommended that it be given the benefit of the doubt and be allowed to sit during the present session. The Assembly accepted the report with an overwhelming majority.

The government derived some satisfaction from New Zealand's role in preventing the League from surrendering further to Italian demands, especially in light of Mussolini's involvement in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>97</sup> But the Assembly largely avoided the Ethiopian issue, much to the dissatisfaction of the British. Worried by German aggressiveness and intent on restoring good relations with Italy, the British Government regarded the non-recognition of the Italian annexation of Ethiopia as untenable. New Zealand was told on 26 April 1937 that Britain proposed to end the present anomalous situation. Because a number of countries now recognised the King of Italy as Emperor of Ethiopia, the British Government believed the League should allow individual members to decide whether they should accord recognition. Britain wanted the question discussed at the Imperial Conference, due to open on 14 May 1937, in anticipation of the Assembly session later the same month.<sup>98</sup>

It is clear from the criticism in Parliament and the press that conservative opinion in New Zealand was concerned by Labour's opposition to Britain's League policy. The Governor-General, Lord Galway, shared that concern. In a letter to acting Prime Minister Fraser, he said that since recognition of the conquest was inevitable it would be better for

the Ethiopians if that recognition was given sooner rather than later.<sup>99</sup> Fraser replied that the government was pledged to defend the League and that the British proposal would have unacceptable ramifications. He said that this course would set a precedent for the recognition of Japan's conquest of Manchuria and of the rebels in Spain. He felt the principles involved were of vital concern to the League and he hoped that a solution could be reached which would not deal a "final and fatal blow" to the League. Fraser's own opinion was that New Zealand should "hesitate very much before acquiescing in the recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia." The government would not make its final decision, however, until the other members of the Commonwealth had been consulted.<sup>100</sup>

Berendsen's briefing papers for the New Zealand delegation to the 1937 Imperial Conference show the government was greatly disturbed by the lack of consistency in British policy towards the League and blamed the Great Powers for the League's weakness during the recent crises.<sup>101</sup> Thus the Dominion's delegates were anxious to discuss the Ethiopian dispute and the Commonwealth's attitude to ending non-recognition.<sup>102</sup> At a meeting devoted to the issue, the British delegates urged the Dominions to accept their proposal in order to avert the possibility of war. The Australian and Canadian representatives were easily persuaded but South African Prime Minister General Hertzog doubted whether any form of recognition was compatible with the Covenant. Jordan was against any solution which conflicted with the Covenant but Savage was more willing to compromise.<sup>103</sup> He was prepared to agree to a postponement of a decision on Ethiopian representation until the Covenant had been over-

hauled. Ethiopia would technically remain a League member and the possibility of an Italian defection would be reduced.<sup>104</sup>

Savage's amenable attitude may have raised British hopes that New Zealand would prove less difficult than was initially feared. But at the meeting of the principal delegates immediately afterwards, Savage delivered a speech which was severely critical of British policy. The reason for this abrupt change can be attributed to the fact that the speech was written by Berendsen and Nash.<sup>105</sup> In what Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, called "a sermon on the immorality of British foreign policy",<sup>106</sup> Savage traced the unhappy recent history of the League and castigated the British for their role in those failures.

Referring to the Ethiopian dispute, he stated that the whole world had applauded the policy articulated by Hoare at the 1935 Assembly. Describing the Hoare-Laval Plan as an "amazing reversal of this policy", Savage argued that the British Government's "complete abandonment of the principles which the nations of the world...were accepting with an enthusiasm and fervour unknown in the past, dealt...a heavy blow to the League." He said:

In the judgement of the New Zealand Government, the results of the deplorable plan to buy off the aggressor at half price were, are and will be disastrous from the point of view of the world in general and the collective peace system in particular...There can be no suggestion that this plan was anything but a drastic departure from the announced Commonwealth policy of supporting the League of Nations and the collective peace system of the Covenant - a departure on which the Dominions were not consulted and the evil effects of which they were powerless to prevent. Indeed, I feel it my bounden duty to say with all solemnity that we simply cannot risk another case of this nature. No one can confidently assert that another such alteration of policy without consultation might not split the British Commonwealth from end to end.

Savage concluded that in any future struggle between Fascism and democracy, the New Zealand Government would not be a party to a Commonwealth policy which favoured the former.<sup>107</sup>

Stung by this criticism, Eden asserted that Britain could not be blamed for not promoting stronger measures against Italy when there was not even universal support among League members for economic sanctions. He admitted there had been inconsistencies but claimed that the element of expediency must, to some degree, enter into the conduct of foreign policy.<sup>108</sup>

British ministers regarded New Zealand's idealistic and moralistic foreign policy simply as too unrealistic.<sup>109</sup> With the rest of the Commonwealth falling into line behind Britain, New Zealand was under considerable pressure to do likewise.<sup>110</sup> MacDonald saw Nash on 28 May 1937 and told him that New Zealand was obstructing general agreement on policy. He said the Dominion's attitude seemed to be that everything should be subordinated strictly to carrying out the letter of the Covenant. This observation seemed to shock Nash who retorted that the views of New Zealand were, in fact, closer to those of Britain than were the views of any other Dominion. He explained that while New Zealand felt the British had not carried out proper League policy on some occasions, the Dominion would never make this criticism public and it would always back Britain.<sup>111</sup> MacDonald was not wholly convinced and he still expected the New Zealanders to oppose Eden's 'realistic' League policy.<sup>112</sup>

In the event, an immediate decision on Ethiopia became unnecessary because Haile Selassie did not send a delegation to the May 1937

Assembly. But with New Zealand still at odds with the rest of the Commonwealth at the Imperial Conference over League policy, the possibility of a split remained. The deadlock was overcome by a proviso in the final resolution which left each member of the Commonwealth free to advocate its own policy at Geneva.<sup>113</sup>

The Ethiopian issue remained a serious obstacle for Britain to an agreement to end Italian involvement in Spain. The New Zealand Government was told on 7 August 1937 that only de jure recognition of the Italian annexation of Ethiopia would lead to a successful outcome of the continuing negotiations. Clearly the British intended to press the League to accept such recognition in the near future.<sup>114</sup> Jordan appears to have accepted the British view because he advised the government that some consideration may have to be given to recognition despite their strong prejudice against the Italian actions.<sup>115</sup>

Savage and his colleagues found the prospect of early de jure recognition unacceptable. In a cable sent on 20 August 1937, the government expressed sympathy for the problems facing Britain but it firmly opposed any breach of the British-inspired resolution adopted by the Assembly in March 1932 which prevented League members from taking action in contravention of the Covenant or the Pact of Paris. New Zealand would only support de jure recognition if it was in accordance with a general resolution of the League.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps prompted by British officials, Jordan tried again to persuade Wellington to drop its opposition. He said that unless the credentials of the British Ambassador to Rome acknowledged the King of Italy as Emperor of Ethiopia, Mussolini would insist that he



be withdrawn. If, however, Britain did recognise the annexation, it would be difficult for New Zealand to disassociate itself from the new credentials since it too was represented by the British Ambassador. It followed that the British Government could not support Haile Selassie's claim to a seat at the Assembly if recognition was accorded. Jordan warned that New Zealand's continued opposition would lead to a public split at Geneva.<sup>117</sup> Savage replied that the government had made its position clear and Jordan was to abide by it.<sup>118</sup>

Ironically, just as Jordan was pressing Wellington to support recognition, the Indian National Congress was appealing to him to maintain his opposition to the British at the Assembly. In September 1937, Congress President Jawaharlal Nehru urged Jordan to continue New Zealand's stand in defence of the cause of justice and the maintenance of international law through the League. He said that because its representatives were nominated by the British Government, India was powerless to register a protest on the recognition issue at the Assembly. Unwilling to allow the true views of India to pass unrecorded, Nehru hoped they would find vicarious expression through New Zealand.<sup>119</sup>

In the event, there was no inclination to raise the matter at the Assembly because of the overt Italian backing for the military rebels in Spain.<sup>120</sup> Mussolini's response was to announce Italy's withdrawal from the League on 11 December 1937. For the British Government, already concerned by the growing ties between Italy, Germany and Japan, the Italian decision was a serious setback. On 27 January 1938, New Zealand learned that Britain was seeking a general agreement with Italy to ease

the acute situation in the Mediterranean. To secure an agreement, the British were prepared to give de jure recognition.<sup>121</sup>

Though unwelcome, the British decision was not unexpected in Wellington.<sup>122</sup> The initial reaction was for Berendsen to draft a severely condemnatory reply. Dated 31 January 1938, the draft stated that while the government understood the inconvenience of the existing situation, it believed nothing short of national survival could warrant the reversal of the worldwide condemnation of Italy's deliberate and flagrant breach of international undertakings and of international decency. The government "cannot convince themselves that a policy of making friends with an unrepentant international criminal is in any way calculated to prevent international crime, or that it is in the long run likely to lead to peace or to improve the international situation."

It was emphasized that the Dominion was alarmed by the continual retreat of the democratic powers before the threats of the dictators. New Zealand considered that the abandonment of the principles of international law and order would encourage further aggression and subversion by those who openly signified their contempt for such principles. The government simply was not prepared to purchase future immunity for the Dominion at the expense of other peoples who were, or may become, victims of aggression by a bargain based on national interests alone. The fact that trade negotiations between Italy and the United States had broken down over the recognition issue was used to show that not all powers supported the British appeasement policy. It was acknowledged that the New Zealand Government did not share the British Govern-

ment's heavy responsibilities. Nevertheless, the Dominion found the British proposal unacceptable and the government reserved the right to make its views public if necessary.<sup>123</sup>

The final version of New Zealand's reply, sent on 3 February 1938, contained none of the strongly critical language of the draft but the meaning was the same.<sup>124</sup> It is probable that the government was trying to strike a balance between its ideals and the realities of the situation. The Dominion was committed to supporting the League and the ideals embodied in the Covenant and the Pact of Paris. It was not, however, in a position to insist that Britain, which would be in the front-line of any future conflict, must accept that policy also. Because New Zealand was the only Dominion to oppose the British proposal,<sup>125</sup> it is likely the government accepted there was little prospect of the British Government abandoning its policy of appeasing Italy. Any faint hope which remained evaporated with Eden's shock resignation on 20 February 1938.<sup>126</sup> Eden had a perhaps undeserved reputation as a champion of the League and opponent of the dictators but his resignation was certainly prompted by an unwillingness to negotiate an agreement with Italy on Mussolini's terms.<sup>127</sup> With a sympathetic Foreign Secretary in Lord Halifax, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was now free to pursue his appeasement policy unhindered.

At the end of March 1938, the British Government decided that it must have the right to accord de jure recognition as a bargaining tool to obtain concessions from Italy. New Zealand was told that within a fortnight Britain intended to place the matter on the Council's agenda

for its meeting on 9 May 1938.<sup>128</sup> The British Cabinet was somewhat concerned by the possibility that New Zealand might veto a resolution allowing individual League members to decide whether to recognise the annexation of Ethiopia. But MacDonald advised that the threat was not serious enough for Britain to alter its plans. Even if New Zealand would not support the British position, he hoped it could be persuaded to abstain.<sup>129</sup> With this object in mind, the New Zealand Government was asked to look sympathetically on the British proposal.<sup>130</sup>

The government was in a difficult position. The Dominion had on a number of occasions under Labour differed openly with Britain at the League. Yet the government shared the strong attachment of previous administrations to the principle of Commonwealth unity in foreign affairs. Opposing the British in an important Council vote was not a decision to be taken lightly. The Cabinet gave considerable attention to the question.<sup>131</sup> Asked for his opinion, Jordan felt New Zealand could support Britain without compromising its principles. "To vote for a Resolution under which a country may act in the light of its own requirements and wishes will not imply recognition of [the] conquest on our part, and I will make our position clear in [the] Council."<sup>132</sup>

Berendsen took the opposite view. He was unconvinced that circumstances had changed sufficiently to warrant a reversal of the government's stand. He was also sceptical of the value of Italy's promises and he questioned whether British policy was not more concerned with safeguarding Britain's security in the present, than ensuring the long-term peace of the world as it claimed. Berendsen pointed out that the

issue should properly be put before the Assembly and he implied that the British Government had only consulted New Zealand in order to pressure the Dominion into abandoning its potentially embarrassing opposition.<sup>133</sup>

The Cabinet accepted Berendsen's advice. London was told on 5 April 1938 that New Zealand regretted it could not support the planned resolution. Reiterating the views it had expressed previously, the government stated that the principle involved was too important to be decided by the select few who comprised the Council. The Dominion's representative would be instructed to press for the matter to be referred to the Assembly. If a vote was taken, however, Jordan would abstain. It was felt that New Zealand could not responsibly oppose the views of states more directly affected by the situation.<sup>134</sup>

New Zealand's compromise was not welcomed in London.<sup>135</sup> The British Government was anxious to keep recognition separate from the question of Ethiopia's membership of the League. If the matter was put before the Council alone, an Ethiopian delegate could attend without credentials and the discussion would be confined to the British proposal. Should the Assembly become involved, the examination of the Ethiopian credentials would inevitably require the Assembly to decide whether Ethiopia was still a League member. Britain believed that such a debate could be very damaging to the League and lead to further division in an already divided Europe.<sup>136</sup> The probability that Britain would face embarrassing criticism of its policy towards Italy was undoubtedly another consideration behind the British request for New Zealand to reconsider its intention to involve the Assembly.<sup>137</sup>

The Labour Government had been reluctant to air its differences with the Chamberlain Government in order to preserve the appearance of imperial unity. Savage was thus incensed when the Dominions Secretary appeared to exploit this reluctance by his statement in the House of Commons that neither New Zealand nor any other Dominion had expressed disagreement with British foreign policy. Coming at a time when the Dominion was under pressure to abandon a course of action deemed detrimental to British interests, it was difficult not to conclude that MacDonald's statement was designed to force the New Zealand Government's hand. London was told on 13 April 1938 that unless the report proved to be incorrect or some form of public clarification was made, Savage would be forced to make the Dominion's position public.<sup>138</sup> MacDonald quickly replied that his statement had been misreported. Reluctant to make any further public comment for fear of implying there was a split in the Commonwealth, he was annoyed to learn that Savage had already informed the press that MacDonald's statement did not accurately state the attitude of New Zealand towards British foreign policy.<sup>139</sup> Embarrassed by the widely-reported disagreement, the British would have preferred that Savage settle the affair by admitting he had been in error.<sup>140</sup> Savage was not prepared to be so accommodating. MacDonald was obliged to tell the House of Commons lamely that the unfortunate incident had been caused by a simple misunderstanding on both sides.<sup>141</sup>

Britain now had even more reason to fear that New Zealand would prove troublesome at the next Council meeting. Nevertheless, with the signing of the Anglo-Italian agreement on 16 April 1938, it was committed to securing the League's acquiescence to the eventual de jure

recognition of the annexation of Ethiopia. Prompted by Jordan's request for instructions, the New Zealand Government had to decide whether it would pursue the course outlined in its cable of 5 April to London.<sup>142</sup> The Cabinet met on 5 May 1938 and one can only conclude from its instructions to Jordan that it was considered to be neither in the interests of the Commonwealth nor the League to oppose Britain in the Council. The decision to abstain from voting on any motion on Ethiopia was reaffirmed but Jordan was told that the government no longer believed there was anything to be gained by referring the matter to the Assembly.<sup>143</sup>

Labour had always defended its right to express views at the League which were not in accordance with those of Britain. But Savage and his colleagues were pragmatists who knew there were limits to this freedom of expression.<sup>144</sup> As Berendsen explained in a memorandum prepared in mid-1938:

The New Zealand Government are convinced that their views are sound and morally right and that...these views...are shared by the large mass of mankind...but at the same time we realize that this Dominion is small and isolated and that the opinion of those Governments more directly concerned must of course be given the greatest possible weight. On these grounds, therefore, the New Zealand Government, after expressing these views have been careful not to oppose the policy of the British Government...Even where (as on the Council and in the Assembly of the League) New Zealand has a decisive vote...we have always abstained from voting against the British Government.

He said there could be no suggestion, therefore, of any disloyalty to Britain by New Zealand.<sup>145</sup>

While Jordan's instructions may have been written with an eye to the practical difficulties of the situation, the determination to defend

the institutions of the League remained. Britain and the other Council members would undoubtedly have preferred to exclude the Ethiopian delegate from the Council's deliberations. At a private meeting of the Council, New Zealand and the Soviet Union strongly objected to any attempt to deny Ethiopia its rights. Citing Article 4 of the Covenant, Jordan said the Ethiopians were entitled to attend and he criticised the secrecy surrounding the discussion. After a stormy three hours, the Council agreed to admit the Ethiopian delegation.<sup>146</sup>

The discussion of the British proposal was held on 12 May 1938. Jordan believed that most of the delegates had already made up their minds on the issue even before hearing Haile Selassie's speech.<sup>147</sup> Only China and the Soviet Union joined New Zealand in objecting to recognition. In his speech, Jordan asked how any delegate could remain unmoved after listening to the Emperor's account of the sufferings endured by his people. He reminded the delegates that every League member had accepted the obligations of the Covenant and it was their failure to apply the Covenant, rather than any inherent fault in the instrument itself, which had resulted in the current situation in Ethiopia. Jordan declared his government's continued support for the League and he suggested that the acceptance of the British resolution would be regarded as a surrender to aggression and a further step in the retreat from collective security.

Though the government had decided not to press for the matter to be referred to the Assembly, Jordan made it clear that New Zealand would support such a proposal if it was put before the Council.<sup>148</sup> He



said that if recognition was ever afforded, it should be in accordance with a general resolution of the League and not by the separate decisions of individual members. New Zealand could not support any proposal which involved, either directly or by implication, approval of a breach of the Covenant.<sup>149</sup> Jordan's speech was motivated not only by sympathy for the Ethiopian cause but also by a strong desire to prevent the Covenant and certain Assembly resolutions from becoming "mere scraps of paper".<sup>150</sup>

With unanimity in doubt, the British motion was not put to the vote.<sup>151</sup> The majority of the Council members were clearly in favour of individual action, however, and this was enough to convince Britain that it was now free to grant recognition as it saw fit. The opponents of recognition had only achieved a hollow victory but Jordan reported that the Opposition parties and a large section of the Conservative Party in Britain agreed with the New Zealand attitude. The Manchester Guardian also suggested that there were many who approved of the Dominion's line and it praised New Zealand for continuing the honourable traditions of British foreign policy which it believed the Chamberlain Government had betrayed. Jordan's speech was well-received in the British press and prompted many messages of congratulation from individuals and organisations in Britain and elsewhere, including a letter of thanks from Haile Selassie.<sup>152</sup>

The fact that New Zealand had openly disagreed with the British at Geneva did not give Jordan cause for concern. He claimed that relations between the two delegations continued to be completely cordial and he

told Savage that he had worked closely with the British delegates during the Council session. While Jordan had resisted British pressure to modify his speech to make it less critical, he had allowed Halifax to make some minor textual changes. In his opinion there was little point in New Zealand being a member of the Council if it merely echoed the British line on every issue. He believed that New Zealand's willingness to take a position which differed from that of Britain meant the Dominion's viewpoint was given its due weight by the other Council members when reaching a decision. Jordan argued that in this situation, New Zealand's support would be far more valuable to Britain when their respective views did coincide.<sup>153</sup>

Halifax did not see it that way. On 18 May 1938, he made it clear to his Cabinet colleagues in London that he had found New Zealand's attitude far from satisfactory. The Foreign Secretary pointed out that the New Zealand representative was due to take the chair at the next meeting of the Council and, unless Jordan changed his attitude, "this might be an embarrassment". Consideration was given to sending a message to Savage outlining the Cabinet's concern but there is no evidence that such a message was despatched.<sup>154</sup>

Back home in New Zealand, Jordan's remarks in the Council provoked a barrage of criticism from the press and the National Party. It was argued that New Zealand was too vulnerable economically and strategically to risk alienating Britain. The New Zealand Herald said: "While New Zealand depends on British might for security, and on privileges in British markets for prosperity, the assertion of an opposite line in

foreign policy can only be described as stupid folly."<sup>155</sup> Leader of the Opposition Adam Hamilton believed that at a time of rising international tension it was unacceptable for the government to contribute to the perception that the Commonwealth was divided.<sup>156</sup>

With an eye to the election only a few months away, Hamilton introduced a motion of no confidence in Parliament on 1 July 1938, which in part described Labour's foreign policy as a threat to the solidarity of the Empire. He declared : "Perhaps the unity of the British Empire is a doubtful question these days, for our High Commissioner is apparently preferring to keep company more with the Russian delegates than with the British delegates..."<sup>157</sup> National MPs asked how the government could reconcile its declared intention to stand by Britain with Jordan's speech to the League Council.<sup>158</sup> Coates questioned whether Jordan's views, which he claimed had sharply divided opinion in the Dominion, actually reflected those of the government. He considered Chamberlain's policy to be the correct one and it was New Zealand's duty to support it.<sup>159</sup> Hamilton and Forbes emphasised this latter point by declaring that the League Council was not the place for the expression of the New Zealand Government's opinion. Rather it was a place for the expression of a united British Empire opinion.<sup>160</sup> The National Party had been strongly critical of the government's domestic policies, claiming they would lead to the Dominion's ruination. Clearly, it hoped to convince the electorate that Labour's foreign policy was also dangerous.

The government vigorously defended both its policy and Jordan's actions at Geneva. Nash stated that Labour's foreign policy was based

on support for the League, which was consistent with the policy of previous New Zealand governments and also in line with that followed by the British Government until recently. If there was now a difference of opinion it was not because New Zealand had altered its views but rather the result of the other Commonwealth governments changing theirs. He said that the government would not slavishly follow the dictates of any one section or member of the Commonwealth, as National appeared to advocate. Confident that New Zealand's views were shared by millions of people in Britain, Nash argued that the government was justified, therefore, in questioning the road the British Government was taking.<sup>161</sup> Fraser echoed that view, saying:

Whether Britain, or France, or Russia do or do not agree with us, the moral righteousness of New Zealand's attitude is not affected in the least. What does matter is that this country has to make up its own mind on international problems as a sovereign country...

Savage and Nash emphasised that Jordan's speech was in accordance with the government's instructions and they insisted the High Commissioner had their complete support.<sup>162</sup> Fraser said that "I hope the High Commissioner for New Zealand will never retreat from the position he took up and most certainly this Government never will."<sup>163</sup>

The LNU appealed for the League to be kept above party politics but it too was divided. Left-leaning members such as Willis Airey, Craig MacKenzie and the President, F.L.W. Wood, criticised the British Government and condemned the Opposition's attacks on Labour's policy. The conservatives backed Hamilton's views. But the LNU was a shadow of its former self. Just as the Ethiopian debacle signalled the beginning of the end for the League, so the LNU also went into a protracted decline

from 1936. It changed direction, advocating Covenant reform and 'collective resistance', but by the end of 1938 the remaining hardcore conceded that the League had, in the shortterm, to be replaced by alliances against Fascism.<sup>164</sup>

The British Government recognised the King of Italy as Emperor of Ethiopia on 16 November 1938.<sup>165</sup> Australia and South Africa quickly sent messages of approval<sup>166</sup> but New Zealand remained silent. Perhaps ignorant of the Dominions' constitutional relationship with Britain, the Italian Government believed that New Zealand was also committed to the terms of the Anglo-Italian agreement. In a letter to Berendsen on 17 November 1938, the Italian Consul, Dr B. d'Acunzo, complained about a recent anti-Italian article in the Standard. Clearly under the impression that the paper was a government mouthpiece, he suggested the article was not in accordance with the spirit of the Anglo-Italian agreement.<sup>167</sup> The government took no action for, as Berendsen had pointedly reminded the Consul's predecessor, unlike the Italian press the New Zealand press was entirely free.<sup>168</sup>

The Italians were also mystified by New Zealand's failure to accord recognition along with the rest of the Commonwealth. In March 1939, d'Acunzo tried to persuade the British High Commissioner to New Zealand, Sir Harry Batterbee, to pressure Savage on the recognition issue, after his own approach had been unsuccessful. Batterbee declined to become involved.<sup>169</sup> New Zealand continued to remain loyal to the League resolution on non-recognition and, according to Berendsen, it gave the government particular satisfaction to address its declaration of war on

Italy in June 1940 to the King of Italy only.<sup>170</sup>

The Ethiopian dispute was the League's greatest test and arguably its greatest failure. Unlike the Manchurian conflict, there was no great crisis like the Depression to excuse that failure. The Assembly had unanimously agreed on action to stop Italian aggression. Sanctions were instituted but they were neither sufficient nor universally implemented to achieve their purpose, and the League was as much the loser as Ethiopia itself. In New Zealand's view, the members of the League had clearly been found wanting, not the Covenant. Labour's loyalty to the League was undiminished and its commitment to democracy in the face of the Fascist challenge was unquestionable. There is good reason to believe that Britain's willingness to negotiate with Mussolini even as his forces were helping to snuff out a democratically-elected government in Spain, made the New Zealand Government even more determined to stand by its principles.

## REFERENCES

- 1 NZPD, 19 Feb 1935, Vol.241, pp.82-83
- 2 Henig, R.B.(ed) The League of Nations. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1973, pp.117-119
- 3 On the Italo-Ethiopian dispute see Baer, G.W. The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967; Baer. Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations. Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1976; Barros, J. Betrayal From Within: Joseph Avenol, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, 1933-1940. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, Chapters 3 & 4
- 4 Commonwealth PMs Conf 1935, 3rd meeting, 9 May 1935; 4th meeting, 23 May 1935, EA11:53. For Australia's reaction to the Ethiopian dispute see Andrews, E.M. Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crises 1935-1939. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1970, pp.30ff. For Canada's see Veatch, Chapter 11
- 5 NZPD, 6 Sep 1935, Vol.242, p.161; 10 Sep 1935, pp.219-220; Evening Post, 26,30 Apr 1935, quoted in Wood, p.33; Contemporary New Zealand, p.263; Sharpe, p.110
- 6 NZ Worker, 8 May 1935, quoted in Witheford, H. Pre-War Labour Attitude to War. I. War Narrative, 1948, p.24
- 7 Angus, B. Social Reactions to Pre-War Incidents: The Italo-Ethiopian Dispute. War Narrative, 1948, pp.1,15-16
- 8 R.M. Campbell to O. Hintz, 8 Nov 1943, Coates Papers 1785:15
- 9 Carter, p.206
- 10 Record of meeting between LNU deputation and Acting PM, 5 Aug 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 11 NZPD, 6 Sep 1935, Vol.242, pp.161-162; 12 Sep 1935, pp.312,314; Burdon, pp.194-195. Cf. Canadian situation. Neatby, H.B. William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity 1932-1939. III. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976, p.122
- 12 Evening Post, 17 Sep 1935, quoted in Witheford, H. New Zealanders and the War. (1). War Narrative, 1951, p.51; Dominion, 3 Sep 1935, cited in Wood, p.35. See Press, 12 Sep 1935; Forbes to Freath, 13 Sep 1935, EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 13 Berendsen to Wilson, 15 Aug 1935, EA2:114/8/3(1)

- 14 Massey, V. What's Past is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, CH. London: Macmillan, 1963, pp.235-236
- 15 Parr to PMD, 20 Aug 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 16 Note by Mason of Informal Discussion with Dom. High Commissioners, 21 Aug 1935, DBFP. 2nd Series, XIV. Medlicott, Dakin & Lambert(eds). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1976, pp.521-525; Parr to PMD, 9 Sep 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 17 Berendsen to Forbes, 27 Aug 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 18 GGNZ to SSDA, 2 Sep 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 19 Forbes to Parr, 2 Sep 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 20 C.A. Edmond(British Consul, Geneva) to Vansittart, 9 Sep 1935, DBFP. 2nd Series, XIV, pp.585-586; B. Cockram(DO observer, Geneva) to R.A. Wiseman(DO), 11 Sep 1935, quoted in Holland, p.183; Parr to PMD, 9 Sep 1935, EA1:260/4/2(1)
- 21 LNOJ. SS138. 16th Assembly. 3rd Plenary meeting, 11 Sep 1935, pp.43-46
- 22 Hudson, W.J., p.81; Carlton, D. The Dominions and British Policy in the Abyssinian Crisis. In Collected Seminar Papers on the Dominions Between the Wars. University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 13, Oct 1970-Mar 1971, p.23
- 23 Report on 16th Assembly, pp.5-6, EA2:114/3/2(6)
- 24 LNOJ. SS138. 16th Assembly. 8th Plenary meeting, 14 Sep 1935, pp.78-79
- 25 Parr to PMD, 12 Sep 1935, EA1:260/4/2(2)
- 26 Report of meeting between Heads of Delegations of Britain, Dominions & India, 17 Sep 1935, DBFP. 2nd Series, XIV, pp.635-638
- 27 Carlton. The Dominions..., p.25; Holland, pp.183-184
- 28 Scott, p.356
- 29 Parr to PMD, 26 Sep 1935, EA1:260/4/2(2)
- 30 Standard, 9 Oct 1935, cited in Burdon, p.195; Witheford. Pre-War.... I, pp.27-29; Witheford. New Zealanders...(1), pp.52-59,65; Angus. Social Reactions...: The Italo-Ethiopian Dispute, pp.1-7. Cf. Australia. Hasluck, P. The Government and the People 1939-1941. (Australia in the War 1939-1945, Series 4, Civil, Vol.1) Canberra: Australian War Memorial, reprinted 1956, pp.78-79
- 31 NZPD, 13 Sep 1935, Vol.242, pp.332-333



- 32 Attwood, pp.83,93-94; cf. British LNU. Birn, pp.169,171
- 33 Standard, 16 Oct 1935, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...I, p.28
- 34 Fraser to Campbell, 21 Sep 1935, Richard M. Campbell Papers 1900:8. Cf. Australia. Hasluck, pp.80-82; Britain. Naylor, J.F. Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969, Chapter 4
- 35 NZ Worker, 25 Sep 1935, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...I, pp.26-27. See Burdon, p.195
- 36 Parr to PMD, 4 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 37 Parr to PMD, 3,7 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 38 Forbes to Parr, 8 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 39 Parr to PMD, 10 Oct 1935; Sec-Gen to Forbes, 12,15,17 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 40 Forbes to Parr, 16 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 41 NZPD, 23 Oct 1935, Vol.243, p.500; Witheford. Pre-War...I, pp.29-30. See Forbes to Savage, 1 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 42 NZPD, 23 Oct 1935, Vol.243, pp.497-501. See GGNZ to SSDA, 25 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 43 NZPD, 23 Oct 1935, Vol.243, pp.501-503
- 44 Ibid, pp.504-506; 24 Oct 1935, pp.519-528
- 45 See file EA1:260/4/2(3 & 4)
- 46 Hancock, W.K. Smuts: The Fields of Force 1919-1950. II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp.272-273; Holland, p.184; Neatby. III, pp.137-138; DCER. V, pp.359ff; Carter, pp.200ff; Lyons to PMD, 16 Oct 1935, EA1:260/4/2(3)
- 47 Neatby. III, pp.140-141; DCER. V, pp.405ff; Carlton. The Dominions..., p.42 n.6
- 48 Carlton. The Dominions..., pp.26-27; Hudson, W.J., p.83; Holland, p.186
- 49 Cockram minute, 26 Aug 1936, quoted in Holland, p.186
- 50 Press, 17 Dec 1935, quoted in Angus. Social Reactions...: The Italo-Ethiopian Dispute, pp.14-15
- 51 Attwood, p.83

- 52 Standard, 13 Nov 1935, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...I, p.32
- 53 GGNZ to SSDA, 13 Dec 1935, EA1:260/4/2(4)
- 54 SSDA to GGNZ, 14 Dec 1935; GGNZ to SSDA, 15 Dec 1935, EA1:260/4/2(4)
- 55 DO to FO, 16 Dec 1935; Record by MacDonald of meeting with Dom. High Commissioners, 20 Dec 1935, DBFP. 2nd Series, XV. Medlicott, Dakin & Lambert(eds). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1976, pp. 493-494, 518-520; see Andrews. Isolationism..., p.59
- 56 Parr to PMD, 20 Dec 1935, EA1:260/4/2(4)
- 57 Parr to PMD, 24 Dec 1935, EA1:260/4/2(4); Carlton. The Dominions..., p.28
- 58 Note of meeting at FO, 21,29 Feb 1936, DBFP. 2nd Series, XV, pp.686-688,708-712; Parr to PMD, 29 Feb 1936, EA1:260/4/2(5); FO to Sir C. Clerk(British Ambassador, Paris), 9 Mar 1936, DBFP. 2nd Series, XVI. Medlicott, Dakin & Lambert(eds). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1977, p.71; Carlton. The Dominions..., p.29; Scott, pp.355-356
- 59 Carlton. The Dominions..., p.31; Parr to PMD, 8 Apr 1936, EA1:260/4/2(6)
- 60 Andrews. Isolationism..., pp.65-66
- 61 Parr to PMD, 6 May 1936, EA1:260/4/2(6); Garner, J. The Commonwealth Office 1925-68. London: Heinemann, 1978, p.81; Carter, pp.236,239
- 62 Savage to Parr, 9 May 1936, EA1:260/4/2(6)
- 63 Parr to PMD, 20 May 1936, EA1:260/4/2(6)
- 64 Parr to PMD, 2 May 1936, EA1:260/4/2(6). Cf. Middlemas, K. Diplomacy of Illusion. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972, p.52
- 65 NZPD, 15 May 1936, Vol.245, pp.149-152
- 66 Ibid, pp.152-155; 'Notes on the League of Nations Regulations Confirmation Bill', memo by Berendsen & Nash, nd, EA1:260/4/2(6)
- 67 NZPD, 15 May 1936, Vol.245, pp.157-159,161-163,169-170
- 68 Ibid, p.165
- 69 Middlemas, p.52; Scott, pp.361-362
- 70 Parr to PMD, 9 Jun 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)
- 71 Savage to Parr, 15 Jun 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)

- 72 Carlton. The Dominions..., pp.34,44 n.29
- 73 Parr to PMD, 27,30 Jun 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7); see R.M. Campbell's Diary, 24 Aug 1936, Campbell Papers 1900:4
- 74 Savage to Parr, 1 Jul 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)
- 75 See file EA1:62/201/2(1A)
- 76 LNOJ. SS151. 16th Assembly. 22nd Plenary meeting, 2 Jul 1936, p.49
- 77 Parr to PMD, 4 Jul 1936, EA2:114/2/2(1); Manchester Guardian, 3 Jul 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7); Report on 16th Assembly, p.17, EA2:114/3/2(6)
- 78 Parr to PMD, 6 Jul 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7); Garner, p.81; Carter, pp. 236ff. New Zealand's enforcement of sanctions was very effective. Imports from Italy, which had run at an average of £10,000 per month until January 1936, were down to £175 in June. Between November 1935 and June 1936 only £1,660 worth of goods was exported to Italy. Savage to Sec-Gen, 5 Sep 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)
- 79 Day, Sir Albert Cecil(1885-1963). Asst.Pvte.Sec to Gov., 1910-1912. Official Sec., Govt. House, 1912-1936. Liason Officer for Foreign Affairs in London, 1936-1952. Who's Who in New Zealand.... 4th ed, p.123. See file EA1:63/2/15(1). Cf. Berendsen's opinion of Day. Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4
- 80 The Times, 4 Dec 1974, Obituary; Campbell Jottings on Nash, 11 Sep 1970, Campbell Papers 1900:16,25; Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4; Jordan to Savage, 6 Oct 1936, PM16:1; Petersen, G.C.(ed) Who's Who in New Zealand. 7th ed. Wellington: Reed, 1961, p.88
- 81 Two biographical notes in Sir William J. Jordan Papers A178:Box 4/ Folder 3; Gustafson, B. From the Cradle to the Grave: A Biography of Michael Joseph Savage. Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986, p.285; Wilson, O. An Outsider Looks Back: Reflections on Experience. Wellington: Port Nicholson Press, 1982, pp.104-105; Lee, J.A. Rhetoric..., Chapters 13 & 14; Wood, p.52
- 82 Walters, p.736
- 83 Garner, p.199; Wilson, J.V., p.67
- 84 Lee, J.A. Rhetoric..., p.83
- 85 Bissell, pp.110,124
- 86 Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4; Lee, J.A. Rhetoric..., p.83. See Campbell to K. Sinclair, 1 Jul 1972, Campbell Papers 1900:16
- 87 Parr to PMD, 2 Apr 1936, EA2:114/4/5(2)

- 88 Savage to Parr, 6 Apr 1936, EA2:114/4/5(2). See Parr to PMD, 8 May 1936, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 89 J.V. Wilson noted in 1935 that the Forbes Government had no positive desire for membership of the Council and would only apply because New Zealand was next in line. Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, p.3, EA2:114/8/3(1)
- 90 Parr to Savage, 1 Jul 1936, EA2:114/4/5(2); Parr to PMD, 4 Jul 1936, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 91 NZ Delegate's Report on 17th Assembly, 19 Nov 1936, pp.13-14, EA2:114/3/2(7); Jordan to Savage, 6 Oct 1936, PM16:1. See Sec-Gen to Savage, 15 Oct 1936; Berendsen to Knowles, 14 Jun 1937, EA2:114/4/9(1)
- 92 Jordan to Savage, 6 Oct 1936, PM16:1
- 93 Jordan to Savage, 21 Oct 1936, PM16:1
- 94 Barros. Betrayal..., p.138; Rovine, A.W. The First Fifty Years: The Secretary-General in World Politics 1920-1970. Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1970, p.135
- 95 LNOJ. SS155. 17th Assembly. 4th Plenary meeting, 23 Sep 1936, pp.40-41; Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4
- 96 Jordan to Savage, 6 Oct 1936, PM16:1
- 97 Savage to Jordan, 11 Nov 1936, PM16:1
- 98 SSDA to GGNZ, 26 Apr 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 99 Galway to Fraser, 3 May 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 100 Fraser to Galway, 7 May 1937; GGNZ to SSDA, 10 May 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 101 Imp Conf 1937, NZ Delegates Briefs. 1.I. Foreign Affairs. Europe. 'Inconsistencies in Recent British Foreign Policy', EA11:68; 1.III. Miscellaneous. 'Locarno', EA11:70
- 102 See Wilson to Berendsen, nd, enc. aide-memoire, 8 May 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 103 Among the more radical members of the Labour caucus there was a fear that the British would use the Imperial Conference to pressure Savage into moderating his government's stand on the League. Sinclair. Walter Nash, pp.146-147; Wilson, O., p.77
- 104 Imp Conf 1937, Abyssinia and the League of Nations, 1st meeting, 21 May 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)

- 105 Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.147; see Sir Walter Nash Papers 0045/0008-9,12-19
- 106 Ovendale, R. 'Appeasement' and the English Speaking World. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975, p.42; Extract from Cab. Conclusions 24(37), 16 Jun 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XVIII. Medlicott, Dakin & Bennett, G.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980, pp. 900-902
- 107 Imp Conf 1937, Principal Delegates, 3rd meeting, 21 May 1937, G40:8. For draft of the speech see file EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 108 Imp Conf 1937, Principal Delegates, 4th meeting, 22 May 1937; 12th meeting, 3 Jun 1937, G40:8
- 109 See *ibid*, 5th meeting, 24 May 1937; Ovendale, p.42; Tamchina, R. In Search of Common Causes: The Imperial Conference of 1937. Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. 1.1, Oct 1972, p.102 n.24; cf. Southland Times, 23 Jun 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:210
- 110 Imp Conf 1937, Abyssinia and the League of Nations, 2nd meeting, 22 May 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 111 Cab 32/127. E(B)(37)22, Note by MacDonald on NZ Delegation's Views Regarding Foreign Affairs, 28 May 1937, quoted in Ovendale, p.44 & Roskill, S. Hankey: Man of Secrets. III. London: Collins, 1974, p.276
- 112 Ovendale, pp.44-45
- 113 See Chapter 10 below pp.352-353
- 114 SSDA to GGNZ, 7 Aug 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 115 Jordan to Savage, 18 Aug 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 116 GGNZ to SSDA, 20 Aug 1937; Day's Notes, 28 Aug 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8); Day to Berendsen, 20 Aug 1937, EA1:63/2/15(1)
- 117 Jordan to Savage, 20 Aug 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 118 Savage to Jordan, 7 Sep 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 119 Mansergh, p.359
- 120 Day's Notes, 21 Sep 1937, EA1:63/2/15(1). See Extract from Cab. Conclusions 34(37), 8 Sep 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XIX. Medlicott, Dakin & Bennett(eds). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982, pp. 256-262
- 121 SSDA to DeputyGGNZ, 27 Jan 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 122 Berendsen to Day, 25 Feb 1938, EA1:63/2/15(1)

- 123 PM to DeputyGGNZ(draft), 31 Jan 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8); Ovendale, pp. 101ff
- 124 DeputyGGNZ to SSDA, 3 Feb 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 125 Day's Notes, 4 Feb 1938, EA1:370/3/1(1); Day to Berendsen, 16 Feb 1938, EA1:63/2/15(1); Ovendale, p.114; Lyons to SSDA, 2 Feb 1938; Lyons to Chamberlain, 21 Mar 1938, Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49(hereafter cited as DAFP). I. Neale, R.G.(ed) Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975, pp.252,286
- 126 Berendsen to Day, 25 Feb 1938. See Day to Berendsen, 23 Feb 1938, EA1:63/2/15(1)
- 127 Peters, A.R. Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office 1931-1938. New York: Gower, 1986, pp.371-378
- 128 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Mar 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 129 Conclusions of 28th meeting of Cab. Cmte on Foreign Policy, 29 Mar 1938, DBFP. 2nd Series, XIX, pp.1063-1069
- 130 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Mar 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 131 GGNZ to SSDA, 1 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 132 Savage to Jordan, 1 Apr 1938; Jordan to Savage, 1 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 133 Memo of 25 points, nd(headed 'To be returned on Tuesday morning, 5/4/1938), EA1:201/4/19(2); also copy in EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 134 GGNZ to SSDA, 5 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 135 Day to Berendsen, 6 Apr 1938. EA1:63/2/15(1); Day's Notes, 8 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 136 Day's Notes, 6 May 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 137 SSDA to GGNZ, 8 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 138 British Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons(hereafter cited as BPD.HC). 5th Series, 12 Apr 1938, Vol.334, Col.913; GGNZ to SSDA, 13 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 139 SSDA to GGNZ, 13,13 Apr 1938; Dominion, 14 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2); Day to Berendsen, 22 Apr 1938, EA1:63/2/15(1)
- 140 SSDA to GGNZ, 13 Apr 1938; Dominion, 16 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 141 GGNZ to SSDA, 14 Apr 1938; SSDA to GGNZ, 14 Apr 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2); BPD.HC. 5th Series, 14 Apr 1938, Vol.334, Cols.1314-1316

- 142 Jordan to PMD, 2 May 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 143 Savage to Jordan, 5 May 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 144 Brown, p.222
- 145 See Berendsen's memo, 'Explanation of New Zealand's Foreign Policy', nd(written between mid-May & late-Jun 1938), EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 146 NZ Delegate's Report on 101st Council, 19 May 1938, pp.28-30; Jordan to Savage, 25 May 1938, EA2:114/4/2(2); Scott, p.389
- 147 Report on 101st Council, p.31, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 148 See Jordan to Savage, 20 May 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 149 LNOJ. 19th Yr. Nos. 5-6. May-Jun 1938. 101st Council, 6th meeting, 12 May 1938, pp.345-346
- 150 Report on 101st Council, p.3, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 151 Jordan to PMD, 13 Jul 1938, FA:260/4/2(1)
- 152 Jordan to PMD, 16 May 1938; Jordan to Savage, 16 May 1938, enc. Ato Tazaz to Jordan, 14 May 1938; Manchester Guardian, 19 May 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8); Evening Post, 20 May 1938, NZ National Party Papers 1096:Box 38; Abyssinia Assoc., London to Savage, 11 Oct 1938, FA:260/4/2(1)
- 153 Jordan to Savage, 25 May 1938, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 154 Scott, p.394
- 155 NZ Herald, 14 May 1938, Jordan Papers A-178:Box 1/Folder 4
- 156 Auckland Star, 7 Jun 1938, National Party Papers 1096:Box 24
- 157 NZPD, 1 Jul 1938, Vol.251, pp.122-125
- 158 Ibid, 28 Jun 1938, p.1; 1 Jul 1938, pp.137-138
- 159 Ibid, 12 Jul 1938, pp.405-406; see Jordan to PMD, 13 Jul 1938, FA:260/4/2(1)
- 160 NZPD, 19 Aug 1938, Vol.252, pp.443,444
- 161 NZPD, 12 Jul 1938, Vol.251, pp.412-414. Nash's remarks appear to be based on the nine page 'Draft Notes Concerning Foreign Affairs', nd, which in turn was based on the memo 'Explanation of New Zealand's Foreign Policy'. Both are almost certainly Berendsen's work. EA1:58/1/1(1A)

- 162 NZPD, 19 Aug 1938, Vol.252, p.443; see Evening Post, 16 May 1938, National Party Papers 1096:Box 24
- 163 NZPD, 1 Jul 1938, Vol.251, pp.132-133
- 164 Attwood, pp.95-100
- 165 SSDA to GGNZ, 12 Nov 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 166 Day's Notes, 3 Nov 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2); see Hasluck, pp.99-100; Memo for Cabinet, 25 Oct 1938; Lyons to SSDA, 26 Oct 1938, DAFP. I, pp.498-505; Carter, pp.296-297, 310 n.48
- 167 d'Acunzo to Berendsen, 17 Nov 1938, EA1:58/370/1(1A)
- 168 File note by Berendsen, 26 May 1936, EA1:260/4/2(6). A copy of the Consul's letter was forwarded to the editor of the Standard. Savage to W.J. Green, 19 Nov 1938, EA1:58/370/1(1A)
- 169 Batterbee to Berendsen, 23 Mar 1939, FA:260/4/2(1)
- 170 Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4. See Haile Selassie to Jordan, 7 May 1941, FA:260/4/2(1)



## CHAPTER 8

## THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1936-1939

Unlike the other disputes which New Zealand was confronted with at the League during the late 1930s, the Spanish Civil War was an ideological conflict.<sup>1</sup> Since the declaration of the republic in 1931, Spanish politics had become increasingly polarised between the Left and the Right. Though the Popular Front, a loose grouping of parties of the Left, won the February 1936 election, its fragile unity did not last. In the months following the election, Spain was wracked by political and economic instability. Among conservatives there were fears that the country was in danger of succumbing to Communism. Determined to stop the drift to the Left, senior officers of the Spanish Army plotted the overthrow of the government.

The military uprising began in Spanish Morocco on 18 July 1936 and was followed by similar action on the mainland. The rebels quickly took control of most of the northwest of Spain and they secured a foothold in the south but their plans were thwarted elsewhere by the strong resistance of government sympathisers. A civil war was raging by August 1936. Britain and France moved to prevent other nations from becoming involved and thus increasing the risk of the war spilling over into the rest of Europe. They promoted a Non-Intervention Agreement which sought to stop the flow of war materiel to both sides of the conflict. The Agreement was accepted by almost all European states by early September

1936, and a Non-Intervention Committee was established in London to co-ordinate its implementation. The Spanish Government was not represented on the Committee.

From the beginning, the embargo was farcically one-sided in its operation. Italy, Germany and Portugal flouted the Agreement by sending massive aid to the rebels in the form of materiel and men. By contrast, the Spanish Government received only limited assistance from the Soviet Union, though thousands of volunteers from Western Europe and elsewhere poured into Spain determined to defend the country against Fascist aggression. Britain and France kept the embargo despite mounting evidence that the policy of non-intervention was not working.<sup>2</sup> They feared any possibility of a head-on collision with the Fascist powers. For this reason, consideration of the dispute by the League was to be avoided by maintaining the fiction that the war was still a domestic problem for Spain. Indeed, pressure was brought on the Spanish Government to refrain from appealing to the League during the Assembly in September 1936.<sup>3</sup>

Although New Zealand was remote from these events, the involvement of the Fascist powers and the Soviet Union in Spain had a marked effect on the attitudes of interested New Zealanders.<sup>4</sup> For some, Spain was regarded as a battleground in the fight against Fascism. Among those who espoused the Spanish Republican cause were the small Communist Party, trade unions, academics, students, Methodists, and others with liberal or Left-wing views.<sup>5</sup>

The Communist Party was the most prominent pro-Republican group, beginning its campaign of support in late July 1936 through its newspaper, the Workers' Weekly, and the Movement Against War and Fascism.<sup>6</sup> One of the Communists' early objectives was to form a Popular Front of all the Socialist elements in the Dominion, which would back the Spanish Government. Wary of becoming too closely associated with the extreme Left, the Labour Party refused to participate in such joint action.<sup>7</sup> In spite of this rejection, the Communist Party continued to call on the Labour Party and the government to reject the neutralism of the West European states and take a strong stand in support of the Spanish Government.

In October 1936, the Communist Party condemned the Non-Intervention Agreement claiming it favoured the Fascists. It urged the government to press for the removal of the arms embargo and to demand that Britain should not give any assistance to the rebels. Three months later, it even went so far as to suggest that the government should sponsor a volunteer force to fight in Spain. The government's curt reply was that such action would be neither "politic nor expedient".<sup>8</sup> In fact, it was to be the industrial wing of the Labour movement, rather than the political wing, which proved the most receptive to the Communist message.

The large militant trade unions like the General Labourers, Miners, Waterside Workers and Seamens Unions were strong supporters of the Spanish Government, although a number of others also passed pro-Republican resolutions during 1936.<sup>9</sup> At this stage, the war was seen as a class

struggle between the workers' government and the old oligarchy of aristocratic landowners and the Catholic Church. The unions donated money for aid to Spain to demonstrate their solidarity with the Spanish workers, which in turn led to establishment of Spanish Aid Committees. Comprising both Republican sympathisers and humanitarian groups, the Spanish Medical Aid Society (SMAC) was established in Dunedin in November 1936 with the purpose of sending an ambulance to Spain as had been done in Britain and Australia.<sup>10</sup> It was only one of a number of organisations which raised funds for Spain but their combined impact on the New Zealand public was almost certainly limited.<sup>11</sup>

Support for the Spanish rebels or Nationalists was largely confined to the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> The Republican Government had angered Catholics with its efforts to curb the power of the Church in Spain, which had been accompanied by attacks on the clergy and the destruction of church property. The fact that the Soviet Union was assisting the Spanish Government convinced New Zealand Catholics that Spain was falling to Communism. In the Catholic press the war was portrayed as a battle between Catholic civilization and atheistic Communist barbarism. In December 1936, Bishop Brodie of Christchurch condemned the Republican Government as a "disgrace to civilization". Not surprisingly, the activities of SMAC and other pro-Republican groups earned the hostility of the Catholic Church.<sup>13</sup>

Pro- and anti-Republicans remained very much in the minority but their mere existence influenced the attitude of the leadership of both the LNU and the Labour Party. The possibility of a split in their

ranks was a major concern and it prompted both to maintain a low profile on the Spanish issue.<sup>14</sup> The fact that Labour was also the government party made it even more important for it to tread carefully. Despite pro-Republican resolutions by some Party branches and trade unions, the Standard insisted in October 1936 that "the New Zealand Labour Party has given no expression of opinion on affairs in Spain and that the Party is not committed by resolutions passed by individual unions."<sup>15</sup> Preoccupied with the government's domestic programme and anxious not to offend the Catholics or become associated with the Communists, the Party followed a path of cautious pro-Republicanism.<sup>16</sup>

The government's near silence on events in Spain during the early months of the war in part reflected this desire not to open divisions within the Dominion. But it is also probable that the government was prepared to support the policy of non-intervention in the hope that it would confine the conflict to Spain and, most importantly, allow the Spanish to settle their own differences.<sup>17</sup> There is no doubt that the government's sympathies were with the Republican Government but this was not simply because it was the legitimately-elected constitutional authority of Spain, though this fact was often emphasised. It was also felt that both governments had broadly similar social-democratic, reformist policies which were opposed by conservatives within their respective countries.<sup>18</sup> In Parliament on 13 August 1936, Savage noted that his government had been able to implement its reforms "without knocking one hair off anyone's head", while blood was being shed in Spain to effect similar changes.<sup>19</sup> The government was thus concerned when it became apparent that the one-sided enforcement of the Non-Inter-

vention Agreement was putting the Spanish Government at a serious disadvantage.

The first indication that the Dominion was unhappy with British policy towards Spain came near the end of October 1936. There had been no consultation between the two governments previously<sup>20</sup> but on 29 October 1936 New Zealand was advised that Britain was considering the possibility of according de facto recognition to the Nationalist Government of General Francisco Franco in the near future. At that time the Republican forces were in retreat and the fall of Madrid seemed imminent. The British Government was anxious, therefore, to safeguard British interests in Spain should the Nationalists be victorious.<sup>21</sup> In New Zealand's view, the proposal undermined the position of the legitimate government of Spain and the Dominion was adamantly against any suggestion of recognition in any degree.<sup>22</sup> In the event, the Nationalist offensive was halted and the British did not proceed with their proposal. In November 1936, Italy and Germany did recognise Franco's regime, however, which prompted the Spanish Government to appeal to the League under Article 11 of the Covenant.

The Spanish move was not generally welcomed but it was put on the Council's agenda for its December 1936 meeting.<sup>23</sup> With the situation still unclear and the possible role of the League even more so, the New Zealand Government left it to Jordan to decide what the Dominion's attitude would be in the Council.<sup>24</sup> At the meeting on 11 December 1936, the Spanish representative did not request the League to intervene but only to stop the evasions of the Non-Intervention Agreement. Because more

than half of the Council members were represented on the Non-Intervention Committee also, there was no chance that the Committee's actions would be criticised. Nevertheless, the majority of the Council members were prepared to tighten the Agreement, particularly in regard to the entry of foreign volunteers into Spain, if this would keep the League out of the conflict. The only dissenting voice was that of the New Zealand representative.

Jordan argued that it was the Council's duty to investigate the Spanish conflict fully and to take steps to encourage a settlement. He said that until the background of the dispute had been ascertained, the Council was not competent to make any decisions. It followed, therefore, that the views of both the warring sides should be heard. It is clear that Jordan was sceptical about the Nationalist claim that the revolt was justified because the actions of the Republican Government were not in accordance with the wishes of the people. He said that "if a nation constitutionally elects a Government, that Government must surely be acceptable to the nation, more especially if it allows of means for its own removal." Yet Jordan believed the Council must be fair and invite those who opposed the Spanish Government to state their case at Geneva.<sup>25</sup> One suspects Jordan made his proposal in the certain knowledge that Franco would refuse to send a representative to Geneva, thereby proving the Nationalist's contempt for the League and the rule of law. But if his aim was to convince the Council that the Spanish Government had a just claim to League support he was unsuccessful.

New Zealand was virtually alone in its determination to uphold the

principles of the League. The other Council members had little faith that the League could do anything after its failure over Ethiopia. Indeed, they were anxious not to involve the League in any dispute to spare it further humiliation which would almost certainly destroy the organisation. For its part, the Spanish Government was unhappy about any proposal which even indirectly conferred legitimacy on the Nationalists. It simply wanted outside assistance to the rebels stopped so that the forces of the Republic could crush the rebellion.

The Council completely ignored Jordan's suggestion. In what he described as "a striving after the barest minimum", the Council merely declared its support for the policy of non-intervention and offered the League's assistance to Spain's health authorities.<sup>26</sup> The Council's implicit abdication in favour of the London Committee pleased neither the Spanish representative nor Jordan. It was, believed Jordan, properly the League's responsibility to enforce non-intervention in order to create the conditions where a settlement might be possible. Still, he thought it was better to have an emasculated resolution than to confess the utter futility of the League as presently constituted.<sup>27</sup>

Britain may well have wished to remain outside the Spanish conflict but the presence of important British commercial interests and the possibility of a Nationalist victory made the British Government conscious of the need for an official representative in Franco's territory. On 19 March 1937, New Zealand was informed that a British Agent was to be appointed to Franco's headquarters at Salamanca.<sup>28</sup> Though the British Government claimed the Agent's role would be restricted to trade rela-



tions, the New Zealand Government regarded the move as nothing less than de facto recognition. In view of its opposition to the recognition of Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, the government not surprisingly found this proposal equally unacceptable.<sup>29</sup> London was told on 25 March 1937 that New Zealand was "firmly and unalterably opposed" to any action which could be interpreted as recognition of any administration other than the "lawfully constituted Government".<sup>30</sup>

The British decided subsequently to put off the appointment of an Agent because of events in Spain.<sup>31</sup> During the early months of 1937, the actions of the Nationalists and their allies greatly disturbed British public opinion. The open acknowledgement by Italy that it intended to keep its forces in Spain to ensure a Nationalist victory and the enforcement of a blockade of the government-held northern port of Bilbao against British shipping, including food ships, provoked an adverse reaction in the press and in Parliament. This turned to outrage when the undefended town of Guernica was destroyed by German aircraft.<sup>32</sup> Sympathy for the Spanish Government was growing and the British Government realised that any form of recognition of Franco's regime would have been unwise.<sup>33</sup>

The New Zealand Government strongly defended the rights of the Spanish Government in Geneva and London but, to the dissatisfaction of Republican supporters at home, it did not condemn the Non-Intervention Agreement.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Labour tended to avoid giving any concrete support to the Republican cause. In March 1937, Savage declined to become the president of SMAC.<sup>35</sup> At Labour's annual conference the following month,

a remit urging the Party to raise funds for Spanish relief was defeated. In fact, Labour appears to have made a deliberate effort during the conference to avoid the pitfalls of debating what exactly the war represented, in much the same way as the League had avoided defining the war's status in December 1936.

As if to maintain the illusion that the war was still an internal Spanish problem, the conference's resolution was dealt with by the General Committee instead of the Defence, War and Peace Committee. Although the latter's approval of Jordan's actions at Geneva must also be seen as an endorsement of the government's Spanish policy, the conference clearly believed New Zealand's role was limited to offering moral support only. The resolution stated that

Conference deplores foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil War and urges the New Zealand Government to press the Imperial Government to ensure the withdrawal of all foreign troops from that country and to leave the Spanish people to settle their own domestic difficulties.<sup>36</sup>

Ironically, while Labour was looking to Britain to secure full compliance with the terms of the Non-Intervention Agreement, British Republican supporters, disappointed by their own government's inaction, had come to regard New Zealand as the obvious candidate to lead the international campaign in support of the Spanish Government.

Nash arrived in Britain in December 1936 to discuss trade matters. His presence gave British pro-Republicans the opportunity to press their views. In a memorandum sent to Nash in February 1937, Geoffrey Bing, a Left-wing Labour Party activist, stated that the intervention of Italy and Germany in Spain was a violation of the Pact of Paris and the League

Covenant. As a champion of the League, New Zealand had a duty to use its membership of the Council and the Commonwealth to protest against this contravention of international law. Bing also believed that New Zealand's stand would galvanise opposition within Britain to the British Government's policy and would force it to alter its views.<sup>37</sup> Bing and others were trying to convince the New Zealand Government that it was speaking for a large body of opinion in Britain and elsewhere. But if they hoped that the Dominion would openly condemn British policy, they were disappointed.

Nash was certainly less than encouraging in a letter to Wilfred Roberts, Labour MP for Northern Cumberland. Nash, Berendsen, and Nash's secretary and economic adviser, Dr William B. Sutch, had attended a lunch with Roberts and others on 14 May 1937 to discuss the Spanish issue. Nash said that he doubted whether there was anything the New Zealand Government could do directly to assist the Republican cause.<sup>38</sup> The government was naturally reluctant to be seen to meddle in the British political scene but, just as importantly, the Dominion was not prepared to precipitate a public breach with Britain over Spain. Nonetheless, Nash, Jordan and their advisers were sympathetic to the plight of the Spanish Government and the views of people like Bing and Roberts probably served to reinforce those sympathies.<sup>39</sup>

Evidence of this is contained in a draft speech prepared for Jordan's possible use at the May 1937 Council. The authorship is uncertain but Jordan later told Alister McIntosh, Berendsen's deputy in the Prime Minister's Department and Secretary of the new External Affairs

Department from 1943, that it had been written by Sutch. Certainly, Sutch was a strong supporter of the Republican cause, participating in demonstrations and meetings in London and New Zealand.<sup>40</sup> The forthright language of the draft indicates someone with strong views on the subject. The author wanted New Zealand to condemn the policy of non-intervention and request the League to act under Article 10 of the Covenant.

The draft began by refuting claims that the Spanish conflict was a civil war. It was on this premise that the Non-Intervention Committee operated. Citing the evidence produced by the Spanish Government, it stated that foreign troops had invaded Spain to overthrow the constitutional and democratic government. The members of the Council were warned that if they continued with the present "policy of drift", then all would become "accessories to another world war." The policy of non-intervention was described as contrary to the Covenant. New Zealand had lost confidence in the London Committee, which "apparently does not even consider itself bound to secure respect for the obligations of the so-called non-intervention policy that it was established to apply." The Committee was criticised for excluding a representative from Spain while allowing representatives of the aggressors to participate in its meetings. It was suggested that non-intervention had been totally one-sided in its operation and, by hindering the Spanish Government's efforts to put down the rebellion, had been "conniving at a Fascist war of aggression for the purpose of destroying Spanish democracy and reducing Spain to the status of a Fascist province."

A resolution was proposed which would set a time limit for the London Committee to secure both the withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain and the discontinuation of all assistance to the rebels. Should the Committee fail, the Council would be bound to take action under Article 10. The draft concluded by stating that New Zealand believed it was neither in the interests of the League nor the Commonwealth for an independent and democratic Spain to become the vassal of a Fascist power. The Dominion would, therefore, vote against any resolution which did not uphold the principles of the League rather than be a party to an attempt to deceive public opinion that something was being done when the opposite was true.<sup>41</sup>

Though Nash, Savage, Jordan and their advisers agreed the Non-Intervention Agreement was worthless and that the League should become involved in the search for a settlement, this draft speech was obviously too strongly worded. It directly challenged British policy and would have greatly embarrassed the British Government. But while the draft was discarded, the principal points Jordan made in his actual speech to the Council were derived from it. Notes by Nash on the back of the draft included: a demand for the withdrawal of all foreign combatants from Spain; a call for the Spanish people to be consulted as to their wishes; and an active role for the League in finding a solution to the conflict, either through the Non-Intervention Committee or, preferably, directly through the Council.<sup>42</sup>

The British press somehow obtained a copy or precis of the draft speech. Jordan claimed that Sutch was responsible. It seems improbable

that such a document would have been allowed to circulate publicly with official approval, especially as New Zealand's final statement probably had yet to be decided. One can only speculate that Sutch may have deliberately leaked the content of the draft speech to force the government's hand.<sup>43</sup> What is certain, however, is that a rumour began to circulate that New Zealand intended to invoke Article 10 when the Council discussed Spain on 28 May 1937.<sup>44</sup>

Speaking first, the Spanish representative, Alvarez del Vayo, attacked the policy of non-intervention. Armed with a 'White Book' containing documentary evidence of Italian involvement in Spain, del Vayo criticised the London Committee for ignoring the intervention of the Fascist powers. He called on the League to face up to its responsibilities and use its influence to resolve the Spanish conflict. Litvinov supported the Spanish demand but the French and British delegates did not. Delbos and Eden reaffirmed their governments' faith in non-intervention and stressed that the Council's responsibility was to endorse the Non-Intervention Committee's efforts to secure the withdrawal of foreign volunteers from Spain.<sup>45</sup>

It was then Jordan's turn to speak but he had to wait while Eden's speech was translated into French. Taking advantage of this interlude, the Foreign Secretary left his seat and, accompanied by his officials, went over to talk to Jordan. According to astonished observers, Eden leaned over Jordan's shoulder and spent ten minutes 'blue-pencilling' his notes.<sup>46</sup> Eden then returned to his seat and Jordan addressed the Council. He said the world had been shocked by events in Spain and

looked to the Council to take action. Noting the claims of Eden and Delbos that progress had been made since the last Council meeting, Jordan pointed out that this so-called progress had not prevented the loss of thousands of lives. He asked whether anyone doubted the accuracy of the claims of the Spanish Government and other sources that foreign powers were committing acts of aggression which threatened the political independence of Spain. Yet, he complained, the League had done nothing to investigate or settle the dispute. Instead, the only action taken so far by any power associated with the League was the imposition of an embargo which handicapped the legal government and strengthened the hand of the aggressors.

Referring to the work of the Non-Intervention Committee, Jordan hoped it would be successful in facilitating the withdrawal of all foreign nationals from Spain. But he made it clear that New Zealand believed that the Spanish situation demanded more from the League than the simple acceptance of the policy of non-intervention imperfectly implemented by a non-League body. He suggested that a special committee of the Council should be established to study the Spanish problem and initiate action to bring the conflict to an end. As a concession to Britain and France, Jordan was prepared to allow the London Committee to continue its work, on the understanding that once the foreign nationals were withdrawn it would endeavour to arrange a peaceful solution to the conflict on the League's behalf.

Jordan's object was plainly to integrate the London Committee's work into a broader effort by the League to find a solution acceptable

to the majority of the Spanish people. He asked:

Would it be within the power of the Council to operate directly, or through the Non-Intervention Committee, so that, the cessation of hostilities having been achieved, the people of Spain could be assured of their own form of Government and that for a while the League might offer to assist in order that peace might be restored the more quickly?

The only conclusion one can draw from this statement is that Jordan was advocating some form of League mandate or League-sponsored international supervision for Spain which would create the conditions necessary to stage democratic elections.<sup>47</sup> Disregarding the fact that neither Spain nor a number of the Council members had a strong attachment to democracy, Jordan proclaimed that the only satisfactory form of government was that elected by the people - a government which occupied its position at the request of the governed.<sup>48</sup> The other members of the Council found New Zealand's argument dangerously simplistic and its faith in the ideals of the League naive. They were prepared to do no more than support the work of the London Committee.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that New Zealand had not invoked Article 10 led to speculation in the British press that Eden had pressured Jordan into modifying his speech. It was claimed that Jordan had become flustered by Eden's interference with his notes and his speech's coherence had been affected as a result. Critics of British foreign policy like the New Statesman exploited the incident, citing it as an example of how far the British Government was prepared to go "in tenderness to Fascist susceptibilities". Jordan was portrayed as the representative of a loyal member of the League who had been publicly humiliated into withdrawing a proposal potentially embarrassing to Britain's policy of "one-sided non-



intervention".<sup>50</sup> These reports angered and embarrassed Jordan. He emphatically denied that Eden had brought any pressure to bear, claiming he was too jealous of New Zealand's position in the League to submit to the undue influence of another delegate.<sup>51</sup> "It is true that Mr Eden and myself conferred regarding the speech I was about to make," he explained, "but neither Mr Eden's action nor mine was influenced thereby. We do desire, if practicable, to present similar cases to the League Council."<sup>52</sup>

Because there are a number of versions of the so-called 'blue-pencilling incident', it is difficult to know exactly what did happen.<sup>53</sup> It does appear that British officials had sought to discover prior to the Council session what line New Zealand would take on the Spanish question but Jordan had, for some reason, been less than forthcoming. This reticence coupled with the possible Sutch leak and the rumours about New Zealand invoking Article 10, would certainly have alarmed Eden and may account for his behaviour during the Council meeting. One is inclined, however, to believe Jordan's claim that Eden did not alter the speech he was about to give. Jordan often extemporized and it is unlikely he had a manuscript before him which Eden could have edited. The more likely explanation is that Eden had obtained a copy of the draft speech and it was his copy of this that he was marking during the conversation with Jordan. Whether his comments had any effect on Jordan's subsequent remarks remains an open question.

New Zealand's views on the Spanish conflict had been ignored in the Council but Savage and Nash continued to express them when the opportu-

ity arose. At the Imperial Conference in May 1937, where Spain was all but ignored, Savage declared his increasing dissatisfaction with the way the policy of non-intervention was being implemented. He believed that unless the embargo was honestly observed by all parties, then the whole question should be reconsidered.<sup>54</sup> Addressing a LNU meeting in London on 21 June 1937, Nash criticised the way in which the League had been excluded from dealing with the Spanish conflict by the Non-Intervention Committee. He said the League had an obligation to become involved in a case where the integrity of a member-state was being threatened. Spain was clearly such a case. Elaborating on Jordan's suggestion to the Council, Nash proposed that the League should accept a mandate over Spain for a year, on condition that all foreign aid and troops were withdrawn. After a year, two neutral members of the League would supervise elections under universal franchise which would determine the form of government the Spanish people desired.<sup>55</sup>

Nash claimed a mandate was a practical suggestion but it was quite the reverse. In an editorial ridiculing the proposal, the Sydney Bulletin pointed out that the League had neither the men nor equipment to put Spain under mandate. Further, a mandate would be unworkable even if the League had the necessary resources, since it was unlikely any of the parties in the conflict would be agreeable. Indeed, the Bulletin suggested that any attempt to impose a mandate might provoke the Spanish to join forces to fight it.<sup>56</sup> The government was undaunted by such criticism. Labour's faith in democracy and the League may have appeared naive to many but to Nash and his colleagues the alternative of appeasement only offered the certainty of world war.

With its strong prejudice against any action which undermined the Covenant and rewarded those who sought to overthrow legitimate governments, the New Zealand Government was naturally averse to any form of recognition of the Nationalists. In mid-July 1937, the Dominion High Commissioners were informed that Britain proposed to award full belligerent rights to both sides of the conflict, conditional on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Spain. The British Government believed that such a move was necessary to ensure the safety of British shipping in the area. It was concerned that the practice of Republican ships flying the British flag to avoid attack was endangering legitimate British shipping. Jordan was unconvinced this was sufficient reason to accord the Nationalists de facto recognition. He argued that since the Spanish Government was under attack from outside forces, the British Government would be contravening the Covenant and the Non-Recognition Resolution of 1932 if it awarded belligerent rights.<sup>57</sup>

The British dropped the idea but tried again in early September 1937 with a watered-down proposal which would have allowed both sides in Spain to examine ships to verify their national character. There was, however, no linkage to the withdrawal of foreign troops.<sup>58</sup> London was told in no uncertain terms on 7 September 1937 that New Zealand deplored what was virtually a surrender to the aggressors in Spain. The government was unimpressed with the British assurance that the concession was not the same as awarding belligerent rights.<sup>59</sup> Such diplomatic niceties were meaningless to New Zealand. The government made it clear that any form of recognition of the rebels would greatly disadvantage the Spanish Government and thus was unacceptable to the Dominion.<sup>60</sup> The British

decided once again that the time was not opportune to pursue the proposal.<sup>61</sup>

The British decision stemmed from the deteriorating situation in the Mediterranean. Attacks on shipping by Italian submarines and Mussolini's blatant disregard for the policy of non-intervention embarrassed Britain as it tried to restore the damage done to Anglo-Italian relations by the Ethiopian dispute. While the British and French bowed to public outrage and called a conference at Nyon, Switzerland, in September 1937 to discuss means to end the 'piracy', they were still anxious not to upset the Fascist powers or Franco. The situation was complicated further by the Spanish Government appealing to the League once again. In view of these problems, it is not surprising that New Zealand's independent stand was regarded as less than helpful by London.<sup>62</sup> Anticipating trouble from the Dominion at the forthcoming sessions of the Council and the Assembly, Eden met with Jordan on 6 September 1937 to try to convince him that New Zealand should exercise restraint at Geneva.<sup>63</sup> But if the Foreign Secretary hoped Jordan would moderate his remarks on Spain, he was disappointed.

As the British feared, Jordan's speech to the Council on 16 September 1937 sparked a lot of comment. He had apparently not intended to speak on the Spanish conflict,<sup>64</sup> but after listening to the Spanish Prime Minister's speech he had "hopped in early" to express New Zealand's views.<sup>65</sup> In what observers described as a fiery and moving impromptu address punctuated by gesticulations,<sup>66</sup> Jordan spoke of his horror upon learning that Italian destroyers had sunk the Republican

oil-tanker S.S. Campeador and machine-gunned the survivors struggling in the water. He hoped that the agreements reached at Nyon would stop such outrages<sup>67</sup> but he was scathing in his criticism of the performance of the League. Ethiopia, Spain and now China had appealed to the League for help, he said, and all that had been done was to set up committees. Jordan asked whether New Zealand too could expect the same treatment if it was attacked. Nevertheless, he assured the Council that the Dominion would stand by the Covenant and collective security.

Jordan then went on to repeat his suggestion of the previous May. He said the League should put Spain under an 'A' mandate and once peace was restored the Spanish could choose their own government. He declared that it was unacceptable that outsiders should claim the right to determine what was a suitable government for Spain. In Jordan's opinion, governments, rather than peoples, had been responsible for the current conflict and he was confident the Spanish people would accept the result of a properly-controlled election.<sup>68</sup>

By the end of Jordan's address, Spanish Prime Minister Juan Negrin may indeed, as one observer remarked, have been longing to be saved from his friends.<sup>69</sup> But while Negrin can hardly have relished the mandate idea, he, the French Foreign Minister and others congratulated Jordan on the definite stand New Zealand had taken. The Dominion representative's straight-speaking also found favour with some British newspapers. The Daily Express commented: "On Spain, a breath of fresh air from the Dominions blew into the stuffy, heavy atmosphere of the Geneva rooms when Mr Jordan...spoke frankly."<sup>70</sup>

This frankness did not please Eden, however. MacDonald was despatched to Jordan's hotel the next day to rebuke him for virtually charging Italy with deliberately killing non-combatants. He was told that the international situation was so delicate that such candid remarks by a Dominion could jeopardise Britain's foreign relations. MacDonald said that until its armament programme was completed, the British Government could not afford to be incautious. Jordan was unrepentant. He told Savage: "New Zealand is outspoken and definite because its Government is definite and has a decided policy, which makes our remarks here taken notice of."<sup>71</sup> In any case, he explained that diplomatic language achieved nothing and thus "when rubbing shoulders with those semi-Fascist people at Geneva, something more than a mere reference is necessary: nothing but a decided stand is really understood."<sup>72</sup>

The New Zealand delegation was very much aware that the Dominion's views were not shared by the majority of the delegates at Geneva. Jordan lamented that the League was "absolutely depressing", the blame for which he attributed to the member-states political outlook which he compared to that of the Forbes Government in October 1935.<sup>73</sup> It was obvious that New Zealand's wish for a democratic solution to the Spanish imbroglio would not find favour with the Fascist states or the Soviet Union. But the New Zealanders were dismayed by the desire of the democratic members of the League to distance themselves from the Spanish Government. Jordan believed the reason was not simply to avoid backing what may be the losing side or offending Italy. There was also a disinclination to aid a government which included Communists and was actively supported by the Soviet Union. The New Zealand delegation was convinced

these factors had been responsible for the defeat of Spain's bid for re-election to the Council.<sup>74</sup>

The isolation of New Zealand's position was further reinforced by the discouraging attitude of the other Commonwealth delegates. Campbell noted that everybody except Jordan wanted to evade the issue and get the Assembly adjourned. The Australians and the Irish shared the British concern that the Assembly should take no action which would antagonise Italy. It was also clear that there was little sympathy for the Republican cause. Jordan was sure that there would not be any great regret if the Leftist Spanish Government was defeated.<sup>75</sup> But, as he told Savage, whether one approved of the regime or not Spain's rights under the Covenant could not be denied. "It may be, of course, that there are objectionable features in that Government," he said, "but you and I are not so much interested in the policy of the Government as in the fact that it was elected, and, further, that it is a Member State of the League of Nations."

The Spanish had requested the League to make a decision on the future of the policy of non-intervention. At a meeting of the Commonwealth delegates, Jordan described the policy as a farce and he argued that it was simply ridiculous for Italy to be on the Non-Intervention Committee when Mussolini was openly declaring that he would not allow the Republican Government to win. The New Zealand delegates were among those in the Assembly who supported a resolution which, despite its delicate wording, committed the League to ending non-intervention unless there was a complete and immediate withdrawal of foreign comba-

tants from Spain.<sup>76</sup> To Jordan's disgust, the resolution failed to secure the unanimous vote required for approval. Despondently, he wrote that "as an actual force, the League is not operative."<sup>77</sup>

For conservatives in New Zealand, Jordan was merely stating a view that they had long accepted. In Parliament, some Legislative Councilors and National MPs questioned the wisdom of the government's stand at Geneva, considering it not only futile but dangerous. They regarded the Spanish conflict as a battle between Communism and Fascism, and, finding both abhorrent, felt that the Commonwealth had no business becoming involved. As supporters of non-intervention, they believed New Zealand's call for League involvement was irresponsible because it increased the likelihood of the war precipitating a European war; a conflict which would endanger Britain and not New Zealand. In their view, the Spanish Civil War was but one factor contributing to the unsettled international situation. Instead of pinning its hopes on the moribund League, and thereby hindering the British Government's efforts to achieve peace, the government should have been focussing its attention on more practical measures like strengthening the Dominion's defences and its links with the Commonwealth.<sup>78</sup>

Not surprisingly, Jordan's open disagreement with the British position at the Council meeting and his mandate suggestion came in for criticism. National MP James Hargest charged that the government had wasted £2,500 on sending a delegation to Geneva since all Jordan had done was to make unnecessary criticisms of "the Motherland and her officers".<sup>79</sup> National also tried to embarrass the government by suggesting that it



had not authorised Jordan's remarks in the Council. Holyoake asked the Prime Minister whether the content of Jordan's speech had been previously approved by the government, and whether the speech had been delivered with the prior knowledge and agreement of the other Commonwealth representatives. Savage replied that Jordan's remarks were in accordance with the government's general position on the Spanish issue. It was customary for the New Zealand delegate to discuss items on the League's agenda with his Commonwealth colleagues and he had no reason to believe that Jordan had not done so on this occasion.

One can only conclude from the circumspection of Savage's reply that Labour was anxious to minimize criticism that the Dominion's attitude on Spain was dividing the Commonwealth. For his part, Nash insisted that the Dominion's loyalty to Britain was beyond question and he praised Eden's role in preventing the Spanish war from engulfing Europe. He conceded that New Zealand differed with Britain over Spain but he was sure both governments were working towards the same goal. Significantly, Nash and Savage made no mention of the mandate idea. It seems likely that the government was distancing itself from a proposal which had attracted more ridicule than support. Nevertheless, both men reiterated that the only workable solution was one which allowed the Spanish to settle their own problems free from foreign interference.<sup>80</sup>

Prudence dictated that the government refrain from criticising British policy directly but concern about the direction of that policy was growing. On 20 September 1937, the Dominions were advised that Britain intended to appoint an 'unofficial agent' to Salamanca.<sup>81</sup> New

Zealand repeated its previous objections but to no avail.<sup>82</sup> During November 1937 a British Commercial Agent was appointed to Nationalist Spain and Franco reciprocated. The fact that each government accorded the agent of the other full diplomatic privileges added weight to the New Zealand Government's suspicion that British policy on Spain was increasingly favouring the Nationalists.<sup>83</sup> Thus the Dominion viewed with alarm the British moves during the early months of 1938 to obtain an agreement with Franco's main ally, Italy, to ease the acute situation in the Mediterranean.<sup>84</sup> Despite an assurance that Britain would not consider any concessions on the Ethiopian question until Mussolini had withdrawn a substantial number of troops from Spain,<sup>85</sup> New Zealand was unhappy with the Anglo-Italian Agreement which was signed on 16 April 1938. The distinct impression remained that the British Government had given in to an aggressor by not insisting that all Italian forces were removed immediately as the League had requested.

Among New Zealand pro-Republicans there was also great dissatisfaction with the policy of the British Government. Within the LNU, a split developed between members on the Left, who condemned non-intervention, and conservatives who felt New Zealand must support Britain.<sup>86</sup> During March and April 1938 the Communist Party, SMAC and the Federation of Labour all called on the government to press the British to end the Non-Intervention Agreement so that the Spanish Government could buy arms.<sup>87</sup> SMAC also asked that the Dominion send aid to Spain and allow the immigration of Spanish refugees.<sup>88</sup> However, the fact that the 1938 Labour Party Conference ignored Spain altogether shows that the issue was still too divisive for the Party and the government to address at home. The

Labour leadership considered the most useful support that New Zealand could give to Republican Spain was within the confines of the League.

Though it had gained little from its previous appeals to the League, the Spanish Government was undeterred. At the May 1938 session of the Council, del Vayo called again for an end to non-intervention, and the examination of the Spanish question by the League. Jordan derived some satisfaction from the discomfort of the British delegate when del Vayo sharply criticised the Anglo-Italian Agreement.<sup>89</sup> The Spaniard claimed that Britain was condoning Italian aggression in Spain by its signature on the agreement.<sup>90</sup> Jordan concurred, telling Savage that the agreement had left Italy free to continue its interference confident that when the war was over Britain would extend the hand of friendship.<sup>91</sup> Plainly, Jordan found the agreement repugnant but he did not consider it was New Zealand's place to attack British policy as Spain had done.

Indeed, Jordan's remarks to the Council were restrained compared with previous occasions. One can only speculate that the almost unanimous disinclination of the Council to consider League involvement had convinced Jordan that an emotional appeal for action was useless. Instead, he simply declared New Zealand's support for the Spanish delegate's request for an examination of his country's plight. Describing the request as amazingly moderate, Jordan said it seemed inconceivable to him that the Council could reject it. He believed that once an examination had been made, it might be possible to offer a solution which would allow the Spanish to decide their future by other than military means.<sup>92</sup> The Council was unmoved. With the question of whether to re-

cognise the Italian conquest of Ethiopia dominating their minds, the other members of the Council wanted to end the discussion as quickly and quietly as possible.<sup>93</sup>

In an effort to deny the Council the opportunity to evade the issue, del Vayo presented his own resolution. He told the Council that since the terms of the Assembly resolution of September 1937 had not been fulfilled, the Spanish Government should be able to procure arms where and how it could. It should be left to individual League members to decide whether they should continue non-intervention.<sup>94</sup> "There is no doubt that M. del Vayo had scored," said Jordan.<sup>95</sup> But while he may have admired the Spaniard's tactics, the impossibility of consulting the government on the resolution put him in a difficult position.

Jordan certainly believed that non-intervention had been disastrous in its effect on the Republican cause and on the credibility of all concerned. He said: "This policy has been pursued at a cost of bare-faced denials and shifting subterfuges, of which one at least of the democratic States supporting the policy should be heartily ashamed."<sup>96</sup> Because of New Zealand's past criticism of the policy, Jordan felt that he could not vote against the resolution. But a vote in favour was also out of the question. New Zealand was so remote from direct responsibilities, he later explained to Savage, that it would have been "unreal" to take a position directly antagonistic to the British and French Governments.<sup>97</sup>

More importantly, Jordan believed that the resolution would have had the effect of turning the Spanish conflict into a "free-for-all".

New Zealand's position had been that if the League or some other body could not persuade the Spanish to settle their differences in a peaceful and democratic fashion, then at least there should be no outside assistance to the combatants to prevent the war spreading beyond Spain. Jordan feared that discarding the policy of non-intervention, flawed as it was, was tantamount to surrendering to the forces of anarchy in Spain, and it would also encourage further acts of aggression elsewhere.<sup>98</sup> He considered he had no choice but to abstain. It was not a decision he particularly liked, considering New Zealand's strong support for Spain in the past, and Jordan felt obliged after the ballot to make a statement to the Council justifying the Dominion's vote. Though the Spanish resolution was lost, only two other delegates voted with Britain and France against it. The Soviet Union and Spain voted in favour and there were nine abstentions.

Jordan understood that abstention was effectively a vote of no confidence in the Non-Intervention Agreement and thus placed New Zealand in opposition to Britain once again. He believed there was no alternative.<sup>99</sup> But in New Zealand there was severe criticism of the Dominion's position on Spain and Ethiopia by the press and the National Party. The New Zealand Herald claimed that many New Zealanders had deep misgivings about Jordan's open disagreement with British policy.<sup>100</sup> The Opposition charged that the government was not only jeopardising New Zealand's economic and defence relationship with Britain but also the unity of the Commonwealth.<sup>101</sup> Some of the criticism seems to have been based, however, on the mistaken belief that Jordan's abstention meant he favoured scrapping non-intervention.<sup>102</sup>

The government emphatically denied that there was any truth to these charges.<sup>103</sup> In Parliament, Savage praised Jordan's work at the League and declared that his actions had been in accordance with the government's instructions.<sup>104</sup> Labour ministers were at pains to point out that the moral righteousness of New Zealand's attitude was not affected by how many states did or did not agree with it. Nash said that the government was determined to hold fast to the principles of the Covenant, which the rest of the Commonwealth had apparently discarded, confident that millions of people shared its views.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, even as Labour was defending its supposedly futile call for a negotiated peace in Spain, Jordan reported that the British Government was trying to arrange a truce between the Republicans and the Nationalists. The effort by the Non-Intervention Committee to encourage a political solution was ultimately unsuccessful but Jordan considered it a vindication of New Zealand's policy, even if the League had not been involved.<sup>106</sup>

At the Assembly in September 1938, the New Zealand delegates continued to offer moral support to the Spanish Government. Yet it was plain that Jordan had become disheartened by the League's ineffectiveness which he regarded as nothing short of tragic in view of the suffering the civil war had inflicted on the Spanish people.<sup>107</sup> But the Spanish Republic had one last card to play at Geneva. As part of a desperate effort to convince the democracies of its goodwill, its worthiness as an ally and of its strength and determination to win, the Spanish Government decided on a unilateral withdrawal of foreign volunteers from its territory.<sup>108</sup> Announcing the decision to the Assembly on 21 September 1938, Negrin requested that the League appoint an international com-

mission to supervise the withdrawal. When the request was referred to the Agenda Committee, the Portuguese delegate objected to its late inclusion on the agenda. Dick Campbell was among those on the committee who considered the Spanish request to be an exceptional case and they succeeded in placing it before the Sixth Committee.<sup>109</sup> The subsequent appointment of an International Military Commission to oversee the withdrawal and the despatch of a Commission for the Investigation of Air Bombardments in Spain, were the only substantial actions taken by the League during the conflict.

Both commissions reported to the Council in January 1939. The Military Commission declared that it was satisfied the great majority of foreign combatants had been withdrawn from Republican Spain. In its findings, the investigatory commission appeared to confirm Republican charges that the aircraft of Franco's allies had deliberately attacked civilians. Though the reports were no more than propaganda victories for the Negrin Government, Jordan reminded the Council that Spain had a right to expect assistance from the League in its hour of need. He praised the Spanish Government for initiating the withdrawal of foreign combatants while pointedly noting that the gesture had not been reciprocated by Franco. Referring to the aerial bombing of civilians, Jordan expressed the Council's appreciation that the Republican forces had refrained from taking reprisals.<sup>110</sup> He was clearly trying to show that despite great provocation the Spanish Republic had done nothing to warrant the shabby treatment it had received from the League in general, and the Council in particular.

Justice may have been on the Republican side but that was no longer relevant. Even as the Council was meeting Franco was mounting his final offensive. Less than two months later the Nationalists were victorious and on 9 May 1939 Franco announced Spain's withdrawal from the League. As a final gesture of support for the defeated Republican Government, New Zealand never recognised the Franco regime.<sup>111</sup> This was consistent with what Labour undoubtedly felt was the Dominion's moral obligation to support Republican Spain. It was an obligation which had little to do with ideology. In fact, the ideological dimension of the conflict was an unwelcome complication for the government. Rather, it was the obligation that collective security placed on all League members to support another member threatened by external aggression which determined the Dominion's policy.

Savage and his colleagues regarded the intervention of Italy and Germany in Spain's domestic quarrel as an attack on Spain itself. In the context of Spain's membership of the League, the legitimacy of the Spanish Government was beyond question. Therefore, once the aggression of the Fascist powers was proven, the League was required under the Covenant to assist Spain irrespective of its internal difficulties. New Zealand's vigorous promotion of the League's collective responsibility to Spain was related to a growing awareness of the Dominion's own vulnerability. The Spanish Civil War not only demonstrated the effectiveness of bomber aircraft but also the horror of total war.<sup>112</sup> When New Zealand called on the League to honour its obligations to Spain, it was very much with an eye to a future when the Dominion itself might have recourse to the League. From 1937, this possibility began to



seem less remote as Japan resumed its southward advance into China. Jordan's anguish over the Spanish tragedy might be interpreted as a premonition of Japanese troops marching into Wellington.

## REFERENCES

- 1 On the Spanish Civil War see Preston, P. The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. London: Macmillan, 1978; Thomas, H. The Spanish Civil War. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977
- 2 On the non-intervention policy see Edwards, J. The British Government and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. London: Macmillan, 1979, Chapters 1 & 2
- 3 On the League's involvement with the Spanish conflict see Walters, pp.721-730,773-774,789-790; Scott, pp.373-378,392-393
- 4 For a detailed study of the impact of the Spanish Civil War on New Zealand see Skudder, S.M. 'Bringing It Home': New Zealand Responses to the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. PhD thesis, University of Wai-kato, 1986. Cf. Australia. Andrews. Isolationism..., pp.78ff
- 5 Skudder, Chapter 6
- 6 Ibid, Chapter 4. See Grant, pp.28-29
- 7 Angus. Social Reactions...: The Spanish Civil War, p.10; Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.25; see Grant, p.28
- 8 Workers' Weekly, 22,29 Jan 1937, quoted in Angus. Social Reactions ...: The Spanish Civil War, p.10
- 9 Skudder, pp.246ff; Witheford. Pre-War...II, pp.25-26
- 10 Skudder, Chapter 7; Angus. Social Reactions...: The Spanish Civil War, pp.3-10
- 11 Dunedin Evening Star, 4 May 1937, cited in O'Shea, J.D. New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War. War Narrative. 1947, Appendix II; Standard, 31 Jan 1938, cited in Angus. Social Reactions...: The Spanish Civil War, p.8,11; Skudder, p.406
- 12 Skudder, Chapter 3; Lee, J.A. The John A. Lee Diaries 1936-40. Christchurch: Whitcoulls, 1981, pp.30-31
- 13 Press, 2 Dec 1936, quoted in Angus. Social Reactions...: The Spanish Civil War, p.5
- 14 Cf. British LNU. Birn, pp.185-186
- 15 Witheford. Pre-War...II, pp.27-28
- 16 Skudder, pp.245,261ff. Cf. British Labour Party. Naylor, pp.138ff

- 17 NZPD, 30 Sep 1936, Vol.247, p.497
- 18 Skudder, p.465
- 19 NZPD, 13 Aug 1936, Vol.246, p.480
- 20 See SSDA to GGNZ, 23 Jul 1936, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 21 SSDA to GGNZ, 29 Oct 1936, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 22 Edwards, J., pp.185-186
- 23 Jordan to PMD, 1 Dec 1936; Day's Notes, 5 Dec 1936, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 24 Savage to Jordan, 3 Dec 1936, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 25 LNOJ. 18th Yr. No.1. Jan 1937. 95th Council, 3rd meeting, 11 Dec 1936, pp.14-16
- 26 Ibid, 4th meeting, 12 Dec 1936, pp.18-19
- 27 NZ Delegate's Report on 95th Council, 23 Dec 1936, pp.3,8-10, EA2:114/4/2(1)
- 28 SSDA to GGNZ, 19 Mar 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 29 See Fraser to Galway, 7 May 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 30 GGNZ to SSDA, 25 Mar 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 31 SSDA to GGNZ, 26 Mar 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 32 During Nash's visit to the Soviet Union in May 1937, Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinov expressed the hope that the Western democracies would not ignore the lesson of Guernica. Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.144
- 33 Edwards, J., pp.188-190
- 34 G.E. Jackson(Sec. Auckland SMAC) to Savage, 4 Mar 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1); Angus. Social Reactions...: The Spanish Civil War, p.15; see Skudder, Chapter 7
- 35 Witheford. Pre-War...II, pp.29-30
- 36 NZ Labour Party 21st Annual Conf, Wellington, 29 Mar 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:357; Skudder, pp.267-268
- 37 'Spain. Notes by Geoffrey Bing', 14 Feb 1937, Nash Papers 1084/0003
- 38 Roberts to Nash, 11 May 1937; Nash to Roberts, 24 May 1937, Nash Papers 1084/0003; Skudder, pp.31-33
- 39 See Day to Berendsen, 30 Aug 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11)

- 40 Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.148; Skudder, pp.77 n.57,264; Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.29
- 41 Draft speech for League Council meeting, 28 May 1937, (written between late-Apr & mid-May 1937) Nash Papers 209/0045-53. This document is reproduced in Skudder, Appendix 1-2; see Skudder, pp.40-46
- 42 Handwritten notes by Nash on back of draft speech, Nash Papers 209/0053
- 43 A.D. McIntosh(PMO) to H.K. Kippenberger(Editor-in-chief, NZ War Histories, Dept.Int.Affairs), 18 Dec 1947, IA1:181/9/10. See Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.148
- 44 Evening Post, 2 Jun 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 45 LNOJ. 18th Yr. Nos.5-6. May-Jun 1937. 97th Council, 5th meeting, 28 May 1937, pp.317-325
- 46 Evening Post, 2 Jun 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 47 Jordan to Savage, 23 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 48 LNOJ. 97th Council, 5th meeting, 28 May 1937, pp.325-326
- 49 Ibid, 6th meeting, 29 May 1937, pp.333-334. See NZPD, 2 Mar 1938, Vol.250, p.57
- 50 New Statesman and Nation, 5 Jun 1937, quoted in O'Shea. New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War, Appendix III
- 51 NZ Herald, 7 Jun 1937, quoted in Stewart, p.261. See BPD.HC. 5th Series, 9 Jun 1937, Vol.324, Col.1738
- 52 Evening Post, 2 Jun 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 53 Ibid; Sinclair. Walter Nash, p.387 n.50; Sutch, W.B. The Quest for Security in New Zealand 1840 to 1966. Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1966, p.205; O'Shea. New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War, Appendix III; McIntosh to Kippenberger, 18 Dec 1947, IA1:181/9/10. For an analysis of the incident see Bennett, B.S. New Zealand's Moral Foreign Policy 1935-1939: The Promotion of Collective Security Through the League of Nations. Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1988, pp.49-52; Skudder, pp.36-46
- 54 Imp Conf 1937, Principal Delegates, 3rd meeting, 21 May 1937, G40:8
- 55 Manchester Guardian, 22 Jun 1937, Nash Papers 66/0001; Standard, 15 Jul 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:210
- 56 Sydney Bulletin editorial, 30 Jun 1937, quoted in Dominion, 17 Jul 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:210

- 57 Jordan to Savage, 16 Jul 1937, PM16:1
- 58 SSDA to GGNZ, 4 Sep 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 59 SSDA to GGNZ, 11 Sep 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 60 GGNZ to SSDA, 7 Sep 1937, EA1:355/4/2(1)
- 61 See Edwards, J., pp.184-188,202-203
- 62 See Extract from Cab. Conclusions 34(37), 8 Sep 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XIX, p.259
- 63 Jordan to PMD, 7 Sep 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 64 Ben Cockram, the Dominions Office observer in Geneva, claimed that he checked Jordan's room before the meeting and was pleased to find that he was not even aware that Spain was on the agenda. Cockram to Wiseman, 16 Sep 1937, cited in Holland, p.200
- 65 Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep 1937, PM16:1
- 66 Evening Post, 17 Sep 1937, National Party Papers 1096:Box 24; Dominion, 18 Sep 1937, EA1:355/4/2(2); Holland, p.200
- 67 Edwards, J., pp.117-127; see NZ Delegate's Report on 98th/99th Councils, 17 Oct 1937, p.31, EA2:114/4/2(1)
- 68 LNOJ. 18th Yr. No.12. Dec 1937. 98th Council, 3rd meeting, 16 Sep 1937, pp.917-918. Under Article 22 of the Covenant, 'A' mandates were communities whose existence as independent nations could be provisionally recognised, subject to administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory power until they were able to stand alone.
- 69 Cockram to Wiseman, 16 Sep 1937, quoted in Holland, p.200; Wilson, J.V., pp.67-68
- 70 Standard, 14 Oct 1937, National Party Papers 1096:Box 24; also Manchester Guardian, 17 Sep 1937, EA1:355/4/2(2); see Jordan to Savage, 23 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 71 Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep 1937, PM16:1; see Cockram to Wiseman, 28 Sep 1937, cited in Holland, pp.200-201
- 72 Jordan to Savage, 27 Oct 1937, PM16:1
- 73 Savage repeated the same sentiments when he met a LNU deputation on 14 October 1937. Dominion, 15 Oct 1937, National Party Papers 1096: Box 38
- 74 Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep 1937, PM16:1

- 75 Andrews. Isolationism..., pp.75,112; Carter, pp.264-265; Hancock.II, p.279; Hudson, W.J., pp.88-89
- 76 LNOJ. SS169. 18th Assembly. 11th Plenary meeting, 2 Oct 1937, pp.99-100,106-108
- 77 Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep, 2 Oct 1937, PM16:1; Day to Berendsen, 1 Oct 1937, EA1:63/2/15(1); Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 78 NZPD, 6 Aug 1936, Vol.246, p.304,307,309; 19 Aug 1936, pp.535-539, 546-547; 16 Sep 1937, Vol.248, pp.116-117; 24 Sep 1937, pp.363-364; see Skudder, Chapter 2
- 79 NZPD, 5 Nov 1937, Vol.249, pp.193-194
- 80 NZPD, 29 Sep 1937, Vol.248, pp.454-455,488-490
- 81 SSDA to GGNZ, 20 Sep 1937, EA1:355/4/2(2)
- 82 GGNZ to SSDA, 30 Sep 1937; SSDA to GGNZ, 7 Oct 1937, EA1:355/4/2(2)
- 83 Edwards, J., pp.192-193
- 84 SSDA to DeputyGGNZ, 27 Jan 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 85 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Mar 1938, EA1:201/4/19(2)
- 86 Attwood, pp.96-97
- 87 E.W. Hunter(Nat.Sec.SMAC) to Savage, 19 Mar 1938; H.W. Crook to Savage, 2 Apr 1938; D. McCarthy(Sec.Wellington Branch, Communist Party) to Savage, 12 Apr 1938, EA1:355/4/2(2); Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.30
- 88 G.E. Jackson to Savage, 3 Apr 1938, EA1:355/4/2(2)
- 89 Report on 101st Council, p.24, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 90 LNOJ. 101st Council, 4th meeting, 11 May 1938, pp.325-329
- 91 Jordan to Savage, 25 May 1938, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 92 LNOJ. 101st Council, 4th meeting, 11 May 1938, p.331; see Jordan to Savage, 16 Mar 1938, PM16:1
- 93 Report on 101st Council, p.24, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 94 LNOJ. 101st Council, 7th meeting, 13 May 1938, p.356
- 95 Report on 101st Council, p.26, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 96 Ibid, p.24

- 97 Jordan to Savage, 25 May 1938, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 98 LNOJ. 101st Council, 7th meeting, 13 May 1938, p.359
- 99 Jordan to Savage, 25 Jul 1938, PM16:1; Report on 101st Council, p. 26, EA2:114/4/2(2); see Scott, p.394
- 100 NZ Herald, 14 May 1938, Jordan Papers A-178:Box 1/Folder 4
- 101 NZPD, 1 Jul 1938, Vol.251, pp.122-125; 19 Aug 1938, Vol.252, pp.443-444
- 102 See Tauranga Times, 14 May 1938, EA1:355/4/2(2); NZ Herald, 14 May 1938, Jordan Papers A-178:Box 1/Folder 4
- 103 Savage to C.H. Burnett(Lab.MP, Tauranga), 23 May 1938, EA1:355/4/2(2)
- 104 NZPD, 19 Aug 1938, Vol.252, p.443; see Savage to Burnett, 19 May 1938, EA1:355/4/2(2); Savage to Jordan, 21 Jun 1938, PM16:1
- 105 NZPD, 1 Jul 1938, Vol.251, pp.132-133; 12 Jul 1938, pp.412-414
- 106 Jordan to Savage, 25 Jul 1938, PM16:1; Edwards, J., pp.175-176, 201-203
- 107 NZ Delegate's Report on 19th Assembly, 12 Oct 1938, p.36, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 108 Edwards, J., p.176
- 109 LNOJ. SS183. 19th Assembly. 8th Plenary meeting, 21 Sep 1938, p.90; Report on 19th Assembly, pp.14-15, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 110 LNOJ. 20th Yr. No.2. Feb 1939. 104th Council, 2nd meeting, 16 Jan 1939, pp.59-65; 4th meeting, 18 Jan 1939, pp.86-90; 5th meeting, 20 Jan 1939, pp.96-99
- 111 Cf. rest of the Commonwealth. Edwards, J., p.209; Carter, p.296; King to SSDA, 3 Apr 1939, DCER. VI. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1972, p.1151; Ext.Affairs to W.M. Hughes(Min.Ext.Affairs), 24 Feb 1939; Lyons to SSDA, 1 Mar 1939, DAFP. II. Neale, R.G.(ed) Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976, pp.50-52, 54
- 112 LNOJ. 104th Council, 2nd meeting, 16 Jan 1939, p.65

## CHAPTER 9

## THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR, 1937-1939

The march of Fascism came closer to New Zealand with the renewal of Japan's assault on China in July 1937. Remote though they were from the troubles of Europe, New Zealanders now realised that they were not safe from the threat of aggression. Unlike the Ethiopian and Spanish conflicts, the war in China could not be dismissed as being of no concern to the Dominion. For the government, only recently reassured at the Imperial Conference that the Commonwealth's Pacific defence strategy based on Singapore was still feasible,<sup>1</sup> the Japanese move into China was an unwelcome reminder of the country's vulnerability. For the first time Labour's call for collective action against an aggressor was motivated by something more than just an idealistic attachment to the principles of the Covenant.<sup>2</sup>

The collapse of the uneasy truce between China and Japan, which had existed since 1935, was precipitated by a local skirmish close to the Marco Polo Bridge (Lukouchiao), a few kilometres west of Peking. The incident on 7 July 1937 rapidly escalated into a war conspicuous for its barbarity. By the end of the year the Japanese Army controlled the chief cities and communications north of the Yellow River; had occupied Shantung Province, Shanghai and the capital, Nanking; and were blockading the coast.<sup>3</sup>



The British Government had, as usual, informed but not consulted the Dominions on its policy during the developing crisis.<sup>4</sup> But in early September 1937, the New Zealand Government was asked for its opinion on the proposal to allow the Japanese to inspect British merchant shipping off the Chinese coast. Although the Japanese blockade was directed at Chinese shipping, Tokyo had threatened to extend it to the vessels of third powers if they carried arms and ammunition to China. The British hoped to forestall this move by agreeing to a carefully circumscribed verification procedure.<sup>5</sup> The similarity between this proposal and another made at the same time concerning Spain is marked but New Zealand's reaction was completely different. The government noted that the circumstances were unusual because war had not been declared, and it also pointed to its reluctance to accede to the demands of a power which was "acting in defiance of numerous international engagements". Nevertheless, it felt the Dominion could not object to the proposal.<sup>6</sup> Evidently, the fact that a Great Power was involved, and that British forces in the Far East were decidedly inferior to those of the aggressor, persuaded the government that it would be unrealistic to oppose the concession in this case.

With the distinct possibility that the Sino-Japanese conflict would be raised at Geneva, Jordan was instructed to support any moves by the League towards collective action under the Covenant.<sup>7</sup> Convinced that New Zealand would be sympathetic to a Chinese appeal, Eden tried to persuade Jordan, at a meeting on 6 September 1937, not to oppose British policy at Geneva. Stressing the delicacy of the international situation and the difficulties facing the British Government, the Foreign Secre-

tary appealed for New Zealand's support when the contentious issues on the League's agenda came up for discussion.<sup>8</sup> But while the Foreign Office was trying to keep New Zealand in line, its main concern was to contain the possible damage China might do at Geneva.<sup>9</sup>

As expected, China invoked Articles 10, 11 and 17 of the Covenant on 13 September 1937 in the hope that the League would condemn the Japanese as aggressors and recommend sanctions. The Chinese may also have hoped that League members would be called on to provide them with munitions and financial assistance. The British feared that any action taken by the League would provoke retaliation from Japan and would not be supported by the United States. Therefore, Eden, the Secretary-General and the French Foreign Minister persuaded China's chief delegate, Wellington Koo, to refer the matter to the Far East Advisory Committee instead of the Council or the Assembly.<sup>10</sup> Established after the 1933 Assembly resolution on Manchuria, the Advisory Committee included Canada, Britain, New Zealand and (from 1937) Australia among its twenty-three members. The United States sent an observer.

Just before the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on 21 September 1937, the Australian delegate suggested to the Assembly that a conference of the signatories to the 1922 Nine-Power Treaty should deal with the dispute. Under this treaty, the Pacific powers had agreed: to respect the sovereignty, independence and integrity of China; not to hinder the development of a stable government in China; to preserve the Open Door, and; to refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China to secure special rights or privileges there.<sup>11</sup> Bruce's proposal aimed

at involving the United States directly in the search for a solution, and also reflected his lack of faith in the League's capabilities. It was decided not to pursue the idea until there were indications that the United States was ready to participate in a conference.<sup>12</sup> Jordan, for one, was greatly disappointed with the American attitude at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee. He reported that it appeared the United States would do nothing until the League had decided on a definite course of action.<sup>13</sup> But to Jordan's disgust the British made it clear that such a resolution was out of the question.

At a meeting of the Commonwealth delegates just before the Committee's second meeting on 27 September 1937, the head of the British delegation, Walter Elliot,<sup>14</sup> put paid to any hopes Jordan may have had that the League would take a stand on the dispute. Elliot said the Advisory Committee was unlikely to recommend sanctions against Japan. Instead, he thought it should pass a resolution condemning the bombing of undefended towns but worded in such a way that Japan would not take it as the preliminary to a declaration of war. As far as concrete assistance to China was concerned, Elliot felt this should be confined to a recommendation that individual members might contribute towards the purchase of medical supplies for injured civilians.

While the other Commonwealth delegates considered Elliot's proposal a sensible one as it was important not to raise China's expectations falsely,<sup>15</sup> Jordan described it as "pitifully short of necessities". He told Savage:

Mr Elliot asked me by name what I thought of the proposal, and I replied that at one time I was connected with Scotland Yard, and I

could imagine a gunman running loose causing disaster and suffering all along the line, and I could further imagine myself taking up the attitude that it would be unwise to say or do anything that would offend the gunman, but I would buy some bandages and other supplies and follow on behind, patching up some of the damage he was doing.

Jordan's sarcasm was not appreciated by Elliot who reminded him that should the League take a definite stand it could mean that there would be widows in Glasgow as well as China. Jordan was unshakeable, arguing that "if that is the spirit that has to prompt us, then, in view of that possibility we should not be in the League at all..."

Jordan was greatly disappointed that while there was support for New Zealand's position in the private conversations he had with the other delegates, this support was not forthcoming in the formal discussions. He told Savage: "It is very evident, Joe, that this outfit cannot function with the present frame of mind of the majority of the Member States." Nonetheless, he was sure that if New Zealand persisted, its strongly pro-League policy would be endorsed eventually.<sup>16</sup> Savage assured him that the government entirely approved of the course he had taken. New Zealand, he said, would "remain at all times prepared to take any possible collective action under the Covenant of the League" or "join in any other movement calculated to deter the aggressor or to assist the victim provided that the prestige and possible future usefulness of the League are not prejudiced."<sup>17</sup>

When the Advisory Committee met later on 27 September 1937, it decided to appoint a sub-committee to draft resolutions on the dispute for the Assembly's approval. Jordan was convinced that an effort would be made to "pack" the sub-committee with those who favoured a moderate

stand by the League. He was not surprised, therefore, when Australia was nominated, in view of Bruce's close association with the British position.<sup>18</sup>

Because New Zealand's views on collective security were well-known, there was some doubt whether the Dominion would be nominated, despite it being a Pacific nation and a member of the Council. When New Zealand was not among the twelve nominations, Jordan suspected that Britain had used its influence to deny the wilful Dominion a place. But the Soviet delegate suggested that New Zealand should join the sub-committee, a suggestion the acting leader of the British delegation, Lord Cranborne, supported "with all the appearance of enthusiasm".<sup>19</sup> Plainly, Litvinov saw Jordan as a valuable ally in the anticipated battle to force the committee to take a strong line on the conflict. The distinct possibility that the appointment of New Zealand would discomfort Britain and other like-minded states was undoubtedly another attraction.<sup>20</sup>

The sub-committee's first task was to approve a resolution condemning the aerial bombing of undefended towns and the killing of non-combatants. The draft resolution omitted any mention of Japan. Koo insisted that the name of the aggressor should be inserted. When Cranborne and Bruce expressed their opposition, Jordan intervened emphatically in support of what he considered was China's "altogether reasonable request". He said that New Zealand would privately and publicly condemn the bombing of undefended towns. "I was on safe ground in this matter," Jordan told Savage, "as the Powers of the world had been officially informed by Japan of her intentions to bomb the towns, and it was not even suggested by Japan that that action had not been performed." As a result of the arguments of Jordan and Koo, the Advisory Committee approved a resolu-

tion which held the Japanese responsible for the bombing of undefended towns and the resultant loss of many civilian lives, and condemned the Japanese action.<sup>21</sup>

When Jordan discovered that New Zealand's part in formulating the resolution had been ignored by the 'government' press in Britain and that the role of Cranborne and Bruce had been given prominence instead, he was in no doubt that the British delegation was responsible.<sup>22</sup> The British were already beginning to rue Jordan's presence on the sub-committee.<sup>23</sup> Reporting to the British Cabinet on 29 September 1937, Eden made it clear that he was unhappy with New Zealand's performance at the League, especially about Jordan's tendency to reproach the British Government for its policy. MacDonald had apparently tried to convince Jordan that if Britain adopted New Zealand's policy it would put both countries in a dangerous situation. MacDonald did not claim that he had been particularly successful in restraining Jordan. But in an interesting comment on Jordan's assertion that New Zealand's views had the support of millions in Britain, the Dominions Secretary claimed that one of the difficulties he faced was that the New Zealand Government had adopted the policy of the British Labour Party.<sup>24</sup>

In an effort to control Jordan's outspokenness, Cranborne asked that he confer with the British delegation before he spoke on the Sino-Japanese dispute again. In return for Jordan's co-operation, the British would keep the New Zealanders apprised of their intended actions or remarks. It is improbable that Jordan took the request very seriously for he resented even the occasional directions from Wellington, let

alone British supervision. He doubted whether the British would honour their promise of full consultation, considering their rather narrow interpretation of that obligation in the past.<sup>25</sup> In any case, Jordan did not believe his attitude had been either irresponsible or difficult. He told Savage: "When speaking, I have been conscious, of course, of the responsibility of any proposal or suggestion, knowing well that we have not the power to back up any claim which we have made."<sup>26</sup>

Following its resolution condemning the aerial bombing of undefended towns, the sub-committee turned to the problem of what steps the League should take to assist China. A proposal which recommended that the members of the League "refrain from any action which might have the effect of weakening China's resistance and thus increasing her difficulties in the present conflict", was put forward by those who wished to be conciliatory towards Japan. Jordan objected to the wording because it implied asking members not to impose economic sanctions against China. He was astonished that not only was there no recommendation for aid to China, but that the victim was now treated as the guilty party. Advocating a more positive lead, Jordan suggested that the sub-committee should make reference to certain assistance for China and to the undesirability of taking any action which supported Japanese aggression.<sup>27</sup> The British delegate thought this too strong and moved that the original draft be retained but with the additional recommendation that League members should consider extending aid to China on an individual basis. Jordan agreed and the amended draft was approved.<sup>28</sup>

The reluctance to assist China was not confined solely to the

Advisory Committee. For some years the League had given technical assistance to China, notably in the health field. On 1 October 1937, the Council discussed a recommendation that the League allocate funds for special measures to control epidemics in China. The British and Polish representatives were unhappy with the idea, believing this was properly the function of existing League and non-League agencies. It was also suggested that an increase in aid to China could be interpreted by Japan as evidence that the League was biased. Jordan disagreed. He said that if an epidemic reached New Zealand, it would be difficult to convince New Zealanders that it was in any way political. Arguing that the issue went beyond politics, Jordan suggested that to stop an epidemic at its source was not only in China's interest but in the interest of other states as well. He was confident that out of self-interest alone the New Zealand Government would approve the allocation of the remaining technical assistance credits for this purpose, and he believed the Assembly would not oppose further aid. Concluding his remarks, Jordan noted that the headquarters of the League Health Office in Nanking had been bombed, implying perhaps that Japanese sensibilities deserved no consideration in this matter.<sup>29</sup> The Council approved the proposal but to Jordan's regret the Assembly did not increase its grant for technical assistance to China.<sup>30</sup>

The Advisory Committee's condemnation of Japan and the sub-committee's recommendations for assistance to China were much less than Jordan had hoped for. Thus he asked the sub-committee to urge League members "to consider how, or to use influence to deter Japan from continuing its present form of aggression". Not surprisingly the amendment was lost.



Only China and the Soviet Union supported New Zealand.<sup>31</sup> Frustrated by the committee's caution, Koo tried to force the issue of sanctions. Cranborne blocked the move by securing acceptance of Bruce's earlier proposal for a conference of the Nine-Power Treaty states to discuss what further action could be taken. Completing its work on 5 October 1937, the Advisory Committee submitted two reports to the Assembly. The first declared Japan's actions in China to be unreasonable and in violation of the Nine-Power Treaty and the Pact of Paris. The second encompassed the recommendations of Jordan's sub-committee. The Assembly unanimously adopted the reports on the following day.<sup>32</sup>

Jordan deplored the weakness that had been evident during the Advisory Committee's deliberations. He believed that the most charitable view one could take was that most of the delegates felt nothing could be done to deter Japan or aid China, so the primary consideration must be to preserve the League's prestige. Thus the proposal for a conference of the Nine-Power Treaty states could only be viewed as the League's most polite way of expressing its own members' unreadiness to do anything for China. He was not convinced the conference would solve anything since its membership would be virtually the same as that of the Advisory Committee. Compounding the problem was the fact that Article 7 of the treaty provided for nothing more than "full and frank communication between the Contracting Powers", and thus was a much less useful instrument than the Covenant. As for the hope that the United States would take a more active role than it had done at Geneva, he was not especially sanguine. Commenting on President Roosevelt's 'Quarantine' speech made on 5 October 1937, which called for international action to

restrain aggression - interpreted by some to mean sanctions against Japan - Jordan dismissed it as designed for domestic consumption only.<sup>33</sup> He was not optimistic that anything useful would emerge from the conference.

In the month before the conference opened in Brussels, the British Government had to decide what line it would take. Publicly, the British leaders declared that they hoped to arrange a settlement of the conflict at the conference, but in private they were unable to see how the war could be ended. With some reluctance the Cabinet considered the possibility of joint economic action with the United States. Eden suggested that Britain should explicitly indicate that it was prepared to impose sanctions should the Americans think it necessary. There was no support for the idea. Chamberlain did not think sanctions would be effective and he believed that discussion of the subject with the United States should be avoided. As a result, a message was sent to Washington on 19 October 1937 to try and convince the Americans that sanctions were out of the question.<sup>34</sup>

The Dominions were sent a similar communication on the same day, although it was only a summary lest they took umbrage that London had been discussing sanctions with Washington behind their backs.<sup>35</sup> It said that in the event of a failure to reach peace by agreement, the conference would be faced with three options: deferring any action in the hope that a change in Japan's domestic or military position would make the Japanese more reasonable; expressing moral condemnation of Japan without taking any further action, or; embarking on positive action in the form

of active assistance to China or economic pressure on Japan. The first two options were considered objectionable because they were tantamount to acquiescence to aggression. While the third option seemed to be the only one left open, the British Government stressed that there were serious difficulties to be overcome.

In the case of assistance to China, these obstacles included the United States' neutrality laws and the probability that the Japanese blockade would necessitate armed protection of shipping. As far as economic sanctions against Japan were concerned, only a joint boycott by the Commonwealth, the United States and perhaps eight other powers would have any chance of success. There was still the problem of evasion, and the possibility of an attack by Japan on a sanctionist power or the conquest of more territory by the Japanese to obtain essential raw materials. It was vital, therefore, that there should be a guarantee of mutual defence, extending perhaps to third countries as well. The United States was clearly being warned that whatever action was taken would require military backing.<sup>36</sup>

Because the content of the message was aimed at the Americans, it is certain that the British expected no more from the Dominions than an endorsement of their conclusion that sanctions were unworkable.<sup>37</sup> Thus the British Government was taken aback when New Zealand fully endorsed the third option. On 20 October 1937 the government stated that it appreciated the implications of giving assistance to China or boycotting Japan, and it deplored the necessity for taking such a dangerous course. Nevertheless, the Dominion was certain that it was the only effective

way to deal with the situation and, with the co-operation of other states and the collaboration of the League, it had a good chance of success.<sup>38</sup> Whether the government simply misinterpreted the intent of the British message or deliberately took the opportunity to remind Britain of its obligations under the Covenant is unclear. One can be sure, however, that coming only two days after New Zealand confirmed it would attend the Brussels conference,<sup>39</sup> the government's reply gave the British a good indication that the Dominion would vigorously support a firm collective response to the Japanese aggression.

Hoping to dampen New Zealand's enthusiasm, the British Government hurriedly explained that the cable of 19 October 1937 was not a policy statement but merely a discussion document.<sup>40</sup> The replies from the other Dominions were as expected, however. Now, with nearly all of the Dominions against sanctions, even if the Americans supported a boycott the British would have a good excuse to try to dissuade them. As Gladwyn Jebb of the Foreign Office noted on 28 October 1937: "...we seem to have put ourselves in the excellent tactical position of allowing the Dominions to torpedo a 'sanctions' policy in advance before definitely committing ourselves one way or the other."<sup>41</sup>

The British were relieved when the United States replied that it wanted no part of sanctions and would take a cautious line at Brussels.<sup>42</sup> The Japanese rejection of an invitation to the conference on 27 October 1937 only strengthened the British Government's resolve to avoid making any commitments. It was decided that Britain would go no further than the United States was prepared to go. Despite growing signs that

his pessimism about the conference was justified, Jordan assured Savage that he would do his utmost to promote Labour's point of view at Brussels.<sup>43</sup> Concerned that New Zealand would prove difficult, MacDonald met with Jordan on 29 October 1937 just before they both left for Brussels. The Dominions Secretary sought to impress on him that the conference was not meeting to consider whether sanctions should be imposed on Japan. After much argument, Jordan apparently agreed sanctions would be out of place.<sup>44</sup> But as he had demonstrated on previous occasions, Jordan was not one to be bullied into silence.

The speeches which followed the opening of the conference on 3 November 1937 quickly confirmed Jordan's doubts about the worth of the whole exercise. Britain, France and the United States carefully skirted the question of positive action while Italy opposed any move against Japan. Only China and the Soviet Union pressed for a strong response to Japanese aggression. The New Zealand delegation was especially dismayed by the "scuttle" of small nations away from any show of firmness. Since the consensus was in favour of a negotiated settlement, Norman Davis, the head of the American delegation, suggested that another invitation should be sent to Japan, and a small sub-committee established, if the Japanese were receptive, to hold discussions on the means to end the war.

Jordan was prepared to support the proposal but, in what The Times described as giving a practical touch to the proceedings, he asked what was to be the committee's actual role. He said: "It seems hardly effective to ask China and Japan to make an effort to get together and

agree. They are already very much together...Unfortunately, they are burying their dead together."<sup>45</sup> To put an end to the slaughter in China as quickly as possible it was vital to do more than just communicate with Japan, he declared. The committee must act as a mediator. Jordan was hopeful that an armistice might be arranged. As to the question whether the reasons given by Japan for rejecting the original invitation should be addressed at this point, he thought a simple acknowledgement was sufficient to avoid creating too many difficulties and stalling the initiative. He also insisted that the invitation be rephrased so that it did not imply that the conference could not take any action unless Japan co-operated with it. The invitation to Tokyo to "exchange views" with the committee was despatched on 6 November 1937 and the conference adjourned to await a reply.<sup>46</sup>

The British and American delegations were in frequent contact with each other during the conference, and the Dominion representatives were kept informed about these discussions.<sup>47</sup> Jordan was increasingly concerned that the conversations, which Sir Cecil Day compared to "a gentle fencing match", were producing nothing useful.<sup>48</sup> At the meetings of the Commonwealth delegates he complained that there was a danger that the possibility of doing anything would be frustrated because Britain and the United States were waiting on the other to take the lead.<sup>49</sup> But he discovered that none of his colleagues shared this concern. At their meeting on 10 November 1937, Eden told them that if the Japanese reply was unfavourable the United States might wish the conference to go further than merely issuing an indictment against Japan. Eden said that the British Government was prepared to consider possible courses of

action such as non-recognition of the Japanese conquests in China and refusing credits for the development of these territories. In fact, these were options favoured by Eden and were later rejected by the Cabinet in favour of an Anglo-American offer of mediation.<sup>50</sup> South Africa and Australia were strongly opposed to sanctions. The Canadians, who maintained a very low profile at the conference, were non-committal.<sup>51</sup> Only Jordan supported joint action by the United States and Britain. But by admitting that New Zealand could not offer much in the way of material support, he was tacitly acknowledging that the Dominion's views were unlikely to have much impact on the final decision.<sup>52</sup>

The conference reconvened on 13 November 1937 to discuss the Japanese reply received the previous day. As before, Japan refused to attend the conference contending that its action in China did not come within the purview of the Nine-Power Treaty and that the dispute only concerned the two states directly involved. Jordan urged the conference to respond quickly to the Japanese rejection.<sup>53</sup> On 15 November 1937, a resolution was adopted which refuted the Japanese contentions and stated that the powers represented at Brussels would have to consider their common attitude towards Japan.<sup>54</sup> Jordan suggested a copy should be sent to Tokyo, hoping perhaps that its vaguely threatening nature would induce the Japanese to reconsider. The conference rejected the suggestion.<sup>55</sup>

With almost all the powers in agreement that nothing could be done for China, the conference met a week later to draw up its report and final resolution. The draft resolution was predictably "anodyne"<sup>56</sup> but

Jordan took issue with the phrase that the Nine-Power Treaty was a conspicuous example of the international instruments which "safeguarded" international peace and security. Questioning whether China would agree, he had the wording amending to "intended to safeguard". Unlike the other delegates, Jordan was not prepared to gloss over the unpleasant fact that international security treaties no longer offered any deterrent to aggression. Neither did he share their relief that the conference had done nothing to exacerbate the situation. In his final remarks, Jordan sharply reminded the conference that its purpose was not to avoid fulfilling troublesome responsibilities or to appease Japan. Its purpose was to end hostilities and it had plainly failed, he said, because China was still the victim of aggression and its people were still dying at the hands of invading armies.<sup>57</sup>

In his report to the government, Jordan said that the failure of the conference demonstrated that many governments which were sincerely devoted to peace and the sanctity of treaties were not prepared to cooperate in the defence of those ideals. The reign of lawlessness and violence was unchecked. The immediate victims of aggression had to cope with its violence as best they could. In truth, he said, an effective system of collective security was at the moment "non-existent". Even so, he remained confident that New Zealand's faith in the Covenant would be vindicated eventually.<sup>58</sup> His only regret about Brussels was that the Dominion was not influential enough to convince the conference.<sup>59</sup> In the absence of any real will to resist aggression, Jordan predicted that in the short-term "dictator-controlled states will have their way". If the Manchurian experience was any indication, he warned, it was unlikely



China would be sufficient to satisfy Japanese ambitions.<sup>60</sup>

Outside government circles in New Zealand, few shared Jordan's unease.<sup>61</sup> If the public gave any thought to international affairs, their interest was more likely to be directed towards the danger spots of Europe than the Far East.<sup>62</sup> The press had strongly condemned Japan's attack on China and much attention was given to the ramifications for Western interests there, but the possible consequences for New Zealand were mostly ignored.<sup>63</sup> The Workers' Weekly was one of the few papers which warned that Australia and New Zealand would be in danger should Japan establish itself in China, reflecting the concern felt by trade unions and the peace groups.<sup>64</sup>

As they had done when the Spanish Civil War broke out, the trade unions urged the government to demand strong action by the League against the aggressor. Consideration was also given to what action the unions could take within New Zealand to assist the Chinese. On 30 August 1937, the Otahuhu branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants refused to handle anything bound for Japan.<sup>65</sup> Matters came to a head at the end of September 1937 when two Japanese ships, the Melbourne Maru and the Chifuku Maru, arrived in New Zealand ports to collect, among other things, scrap iron. Dunedin and Auckland watersiders were reluctant to load the ships and this led the Federation of Labour to recommend an embargo on the export of all war materials to Japan.<sup>66</sup> On 29 September 1937, Lyttelton watersiders refused to load the Melbourne Maru and the same action was taken against the Chifuku Maru in Auckland the next day.<sup>67</sup>

Acting on the request of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, Savage quickly intervened in the dispute. He declared that the government took an extremely serious view of the union action and it refused to be dictated to on what countries New Zealand could trade with by five or six different organisations.<sup>68</sup> To avert the "serious complications" which might arise if the ban continued,<sup>69</sup> Savage called a conference between the government, the Federation of Labour and the Watersiders Union. It was announced on 4 October 1937 that the ban would be lifted but the government would impose an embargo on the export of all scrap metal.<sup>70</sup> In spite of the fact that no other country imported scrap metal from New Zealand, Savage insisted that the decision was not directed specifically at Japan and the only reason for the embargo was to enable the Dominion to develop its own iron industry.<sup>71</sup>

The watersiders' action met with little support in the country as a whole.<sup>72</sup> Businessmen were appalled by the threat it posed to New Zealand's trade with Japan.<sup>73</sup> Some concern was expressed in Parliament that the Japanese might retaliate by boycotting New Zealand wool.<sup>74</sup> The New Zealand Herald charged that the watersiders' action "amounts to declaring an economic war, an act that may lead on to military hostilities. The watersiders are not entitled to accept the responsibility of exposing New Zealand to such a risk."<sup>75</sup> The Press agreed that taking economic measures against another state was properly the province of governments acting through the League, and for any private organisation to arrogate that role was to invite chaos.<sup>76</sup> The Standard believed that even an ineffective boycott by New Zealand would have serious implications for the Commonwealth's relations with Japan.<sup>77</sup> Only Left-wing

papers like the Workers' Weekly and Tomorrow backed the watersiders.<sup>78</sup>

The call by the Federation of Labour at the end of October 1937 for a personal boycott of Japanese goods by New Zealand workers<sup>79</sup> also received little support from the public or the Labour movement.<sup>80</sup> The Workers' Weekly supported the campaign by printing a list of articles of Japanese origin.<sup>81</sup> Some Labour Party branches passed resolutions of support but these were not published.<sup>82</sup> The government simply ignored the boycott.<sup>83</sup> The Standard thought that because it was not part of an organised worldwide campaign, the boycott would have a minimal effect and was more likely to hurt the pockets of New Zealand workers than the Japanese.<sup>84</sup> It is possible that the poor response convinced the Federation of Labour not to go further and place an embargo on all exports to Japan.<sup>85</sup> At its annual conference in April 1938, a resolution urging the Commonwealth to take collective action against Japan was passed but the National Executive declared that an embargo on scrap metal and the personal boycott were as far as New Zealand could go.<sup>86</sup> Ironically, the Chinese delegation to the League later praised the people of New Zealand for their economic boycott against Japan.<sup>87</sup>

The failure of the Brussels Conference to end hostilities prompted trade unions, peace groups and some Labour Party branches to demand that sanctions be imposed against Japan by the League.<sup>88</sup> After a discouraging response to its request to Britain for military and financial assistance, the Chinese Government considered it had little choice but to take its case back to the League and demand sanctions also.<sup>89</sup> This was in spite of the clear message the Chinese had received at Brussels that

a return to Geneva would be pointless and might even cause the United States to take a less sympathetic stand on the dispute.<sup>90</sup> At a private meeting with the representatives of Britain, France and the Soviet Union at Geneva on 28 January 1938, Koo tried to persuade them to support sanctions against Japan. The British and French representatives were predictably opposed and persuaded Koo to accept a draft declaration reaffirming the duty of League members to assist China. This draft was presented to the Council on 2 February 1938.<sup>91</sup>

Jordan deplored the fact that the Chinese request had not been put before the full Council. He told Savage that at a time when there was much criticism of the League, the holding of a secret meeting of the major powers of the Council to determine that body's response to a problem and then expecting the other members to accept a fait accompli was certain to damage the League's prestige further. The situation was not helped by the inanity of the resolution. "For all that the resolution contains," Jordan wrote, "it might as well have remained unwritten. It calls for no action on the part of the League and may be classed amongst those pious and wordy documents at which the detractors of the Geneva institution have so often pointed the finger of scorn."<sup>92</sup> Because Koo had already accepted the resolution, Jordan felt that he could not do otherwise and it was passed unanimously.<sup>93</sup>

In Wellington, Berendsen shared Jordan's dismay at the weak response of Britain and France to China's appeal. He was particularly concerned that the British Government's decision to press for de jure recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia would assist the Japan-

ese case for the recognition of their rule in Manchuria. Even more disturbing was the apparent British acceptance that if China wanted to end the present conflict with Japan, it would have to recognise the independence of Manchukuo as part of the settlement.<sup>94</sup> This recognition would allow other states to follow suit, which would be important in normalising their relations with Japan. Berendsen believed that the New Zealand Government would "find it impossible to accept the theory that a consent to one international crime extorted from the reluctant victim by means of a second international crime can properly be regarded as having any bearing at all on the question of recognition by other Powers." Since it was also clear that the United States still subscribed to the principle of non-recognition, Berendsen thought it would be unwise for the British Government to endanger future Anglo-American collaboration in the Far East by promoting the recognition issue in respect to Ethiopia.<sup>95</sup>

It was impossible for Berendsen to consider the Chinese, Spanish or Ethiopian disputes as purely intellectual problems. He told Campbell:

Personally, I cannot get away from the ethical side, especially in this confused state of affairs, and I cling, without much hope but with a good deal of conviction, to the view that right is right and wrong is wrong, and it can never be wise to do wrong or to tolerate wrong. Goodness knows how far those principles are really applicable in the present state of affairs.<sup>96</sup>

Certainly, the League's handling of the subsequent Chinese appeals cannot have given Berendsen much cause for optimism.

China appealed to the League four more times in 1938 and 1939. The repeated requests for the Council to institute sanctions against Japan

and to provide assistance to enable China to defend itself were rejected.<sup>97</sup> Though Jordan realised he was indulging in gestures, he consistently supported China.<sup>98</sup> But his strong speech to the Council in May 1939 on behalf of the Chinese alarmed Wellington.<sup>99</sup> Jordan was sharply reminded that he was not to commit New Zealand to the imposition of sanctions when it was clear that there was no support in the League for such action.<sup>100</sup> The government had adopted a more cautious approach by this time,<sup>101</sup> for it had come to doubt whether it was still in the Dominion's best interests to support China as vigorously as previously. During the early months of 1939, Japan advanced into Hainan and the Spratly Islands, threatening the British military facilities in Hong Kong and Singapore. New Zealand was coming to the uncomfortable realisation that the Far East was now the "Near North".<sup>102</sup> At the Pacific Defence Conference, attended by representatives from New Zealand, Britain and Australia during April 1939, the New Zealand Government finally conceded that collective security through the League was no longer practicable. The Commonwealth had now to look to its own security arrangements.<sup>103</sup>

The League had ceased to be a priority for the Labour Government by mid-1939 but, as Jordan had frequently pointed out, many countries had distanced themselves from the political activities at Geneva long before. Prompted by the failure of the League's effort to stop Italian aggression in Ethiopia, some members began to question the principle of collective security. The issue behind the call for the reform of the Covenant was not how the League might more effectively respond to a future crisis but whether it was the League's proper role to respond at

all. It was China's misfortune that the Japanese attack in 1937 came at a time when many members had made it clear that the decision whether they would assist a victim of aggression would be determined not by the League but by individual members acting in accordance with their own priorities. While Jordan strove to get the League to fulfil its responsibilities under Articles 11, 16 and 17, other delegates were endeavouring to have those irksome clauses removed from the Covenant in the name of reform.

## REFERENCES

- 1 McGibbon, p.293
- 2 Burdon, p.269
- 3 On the Sino-Japanese War see Wilson, D. When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945. New York: Viking Press, 1982; Lee, B.A. Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939: A Study in the Dilemmas of British Decline. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973, Chapters 1 & 2
- 4 Jordan to Savage, 18 Aug 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11)
- 5 SSDA to GGNZ, 4,4 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11); Lee, B.A., pp.41-43
- 6 GGNZ to SSDA, 6 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11)
- 7 Savage to Jordan, 7 Sep 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 8 Jordan to PMD, 7 Sep 1937, EA1:260/4/2(8)
- 9 On the League's involvement with the Sino-Japanese dispute see Walters, pp.731-738; Lissington. New Zealand..., pp.97-108; Scott, pp. 383-386, 392-394
- 10 Jordan to PMD, 19 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11); 'Japanese Aggression in China: Report on Proceedings at the League of Nations and 'Nine-Power Conference'', 9 Dec 1937, p.2; Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Lee, B.A., pp.51-52
- 11 See Conf on the Limitation of Armaments. Report of Hon. Sir John Salmond, AJHR. 1922, A-5, Appendix
- 12 Lee, B.A., p.52
- 13 Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep 1937, PM16:1
- 14 Elliot, the Secretary of State for Scotland, replaced Eden who had returned to London. See Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Day to Berendsen, 3 Nov 1937, EA1:63/2/15(1)
- 15 See Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 16 Jordan to Savage, 27 Sep 1937, PM16:1; Jordan to PMD, 28 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11); Holland, p.200
- 17 Savage to Jordan, 29 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11)



- 18 See Bruce to PMD, 29 Sep 1937, DAFP. I, p.201; Hudson, W.J., p.90
- 19 Jordan to Savage, 2 Oct 1937, PM16:1; Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 20 Holland, p.201
- 21 Jordan to PMD, 30 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11); Jordan to Savage, 2 Oct 1937, PM16:1; Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Day to Berendsen, 1 Oct 1937, EA1:63/2/15(1); Edmond to Eden, 28 Sep 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XXI. Medlicott, Dakin & Bennett(eds). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984, p.345; Standard, 4 Nov 1937, National Party Papers 1096:Box 24
- 22 Jordan to PMD, 30,30 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11); Jordan to Savage, 2 Oct 1937, PM16:1; Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 23 Cockram to Wiseman, 28 Sep 1937, quoted in Holland, pp.200-201
- 24 Extract from Cab. Conclusions 35(37), 29 Sep 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XXI, pp.348-350. See Naylor, pp.207-212
- 25 Jordan to PMD, 30 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(11). Cranborne is supposed to have said some years later: "When Bill Jordan got up to speak in the League of Nations, it was like a breath of hot air." Garner, p.199
- 26 Jordan to Savage, 2 Oct 1937. The Buller Labour Representation Committee was one of several groups which commended Jordan's outspokenness. W.P. Jackson(Sec.Buller LRC) to Savage, 10 Nov 1937, PM16:1
- 27 See 'Japanese Aggression in China: Report...', p.13, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 28 Jordan to PMD, 6 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 29 LNOJ. 18th Yr. No.12. Dec 1937. 99th Council, 2nd meeting, 1 Oct 1937, pp.937-941
- 30 Report on 18th Assembly, p.44, EA2:114/3/2(7)
- 31 Jordan to PMD, 6 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 32 Lee, B.A., pp.53-54; Aga Khan(Pres.Assembly) to Savage, 6 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 33 Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12). See Lee, B.A., pp.54-55
- 34 Lee, B.A., pp.56-69
- 35 Hudson, W.J., p.93
- 36 SSDA to GGNZ, 18,19 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)

- 37 Extract from Cab. Conclusions 37(37), 13 Oct 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XXI, pp.390-394
- 38 GGNZ to SSDA, 20 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 39 Savage to Sir R. Clive(British Ambassador, Belgium), 18 Oct 1937; SSDA to GGNZ, 16 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 40 SSDA to GGNZ, 20 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 41 Ovendale, p.79. Jebb was Private Secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretaries of State, Foreign Office, 1937-1940
- 42 SSDA to GGNZ, 21 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Lee, B.A., pp.69-70
- 43 Jordan to Savage, 27 Oct 1937, PM16:1
- 44 Ovendale, p.83
- 45 Brussels Conf, Acts of the Conf, 3rd Plenary meeting, 4 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 46 Ibid, 3rd-5th Plenary meetings, 4-6 Nov 1937; Clive to FO, 4,5 Nov 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XXI, pp.426-427,431-432; Day's Notes, 5 Nov 1937; Jordan to PMD, 6 Nov 1937; Jordan to Savage, 9 Nov 1937; Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 47 Jordan to PMD, 10 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Ovendale, p.83; Lee, B. A., pp.71-77
- 48 Day's Notes, 10 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 49 Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 50 Lee, B.A., pp.75-76
- 51 See Massey, pp.233-234; DCER. VI, pp.1018ff
- 52 Clive to FO, 12 Nov 1937, DBFP. 2nd Series, XXI, pp.475-478; see Jordan to Savage, 24 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 53 Brussels Conf, Acts of the Conf, 8th Plenary meeting, 13 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 54 Jordan to PMD, 16 Nov 1937; Day's Notes, 17 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 55 Brussels Conf, Acts of the Conf, 9th Plenary meeting, 15 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 56 Avon, Earl of. The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators. London: Cassel, 1962, p.540

- 57 Brussels Conf, Acts of the Conf, 11th Plenary meeting, 24 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 58 'Japanese Aggression in China: Report...', p.13; see Jordan to Savage, 23 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 59 Jordan to Savage, 24 Nov, 9 Dec 1937; see Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 60 Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937; see Savage to Jordan, 20 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Savage to Jordan, 15 Mar 1938, PM16:1
- 61 Cf. reaction in Britain. Lee, B.A., pp.50-51
- 62 Milner, p.103
- 63 Ibid, pp.105-110
- 64 Lissington. New Zealand..., p.116. See file EA1:264/2/7(12-13)
- 65 Workers' Weekly, 10 Sep 1937, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p. 32
- 66 New Zealand's exports of scrap metal to Japan rose from less than £25,000 worth in 1936 to over £56,000 in 1937. Milner, p.71
- 67 Evening Post, 28,29,30 Sep 1937, cited in Witheford. Pre-War...II, pp.32-33
- 68 Evening Post, 1,4 Oct 1937, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.33. Cf. Australia. Lyons to T. Wakamatsu(Japanese Consul-Gen, Sydney), 5 Oct 1937, DAFP. I, p.205; Carter, p.308 n.9
- 69 NZPD, 5 Oct 1937, Vol.248, p.574
- 70 Evening Post, 4 Oct 1937, quoted in Lissington. New Zealand..., p. 116
- 71 Milner, p.104; Burdon, pp.269-270
- 72 Cf. T. Walker(Sec.Grey Miners Central Cmte) to Savage, 6 Oct 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Press, 8 Oct 1937, quoted in Lissington. New Zealand..., p.117
- 73 Evening Post, 30 Sep 1937, cited in Lissington. New Zealand..., p. 117
- 74 NZPD, 17 Nov 1937, Vol.249, p.500; 9 Dec 1937, p.1183. See Milner, pp.67-70
- 75 NZ Herald, 1 Oct 1937, quoted in Lissington, M.P. New Zealand and Japan - Relations until December 1941. War Narrative. 1948, pp.154-155

- 76 Press, 5 Oct 1937, quoted in Lissington. New Zealand..., p.154
- 77 Standard, 7 Oct 1937, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.35
- 78 Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.36; Lissington. New Zealand..., pp.155-156
- 79 Standard, 28 Oct 1937, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.36
- 80 See Milner, pp.72-73
- 81 Lissington. New Zealand..., p.118
- 82 Workers' Weekly, 29 Apr 1938, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.38
- 83 Evening Post, 29 Oct 1937, cited in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.36. Cf. Australian Labour Party. Hasluck, p.87
- 84 Standard, 4 Nov 1937, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, p.36
- 85 Deputation from Nat.Executive,FOL to Cabinet, 18 Mar 1938, Nash Papers 2117/0002
- 86 Standard, 21 Apr 1938; Workers' Weekly, 22 Apr 1938, quoted in Witheford. Pre-War...II, pp.38,56. Cf. Australian trade union action. Edwards, P.G., pp.101-102; Hasluck, p.87
- 87 Jordan to Savage, 25 May 1938, EA2:114/4/2(2)
- 88 A.C. Richards(Sec.Mt. Albert NZLP) to Savage, 15 Nov 1937; E. Gibson (Sec.Women's Int. League for Peace & Freedom) to Savage, 17 Nov 1937; M. Wynne(Sec.Auckland LNU) to Berendsen, 22 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 89 Lee, B.A., pp.87-88; see Day's Notes, 7 Jan 1938, EA1:264/2/7(13)
- 90 Jordan to Savage, 9 Dec 1937; see Jordan to Savage, 23 Nov 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); Christie to Skelton, 21 Nov 1937, DCER. VI, pp.104-106; Deputation from Nat. Executive, FOL to Cabinet, 18 Mar 1938, Nash Papers 2117/0002
- 91 Lee, B.A., p.88
- 92 NZ Delegate's Report on 100th Council, 11 Feb 1938, pp.38-40, EA2:114/4/2(1)
- 93 LNOJ. 19th Yr. No.2. Feb 1938. 100th Council, 6th meeting, 2 Feb 1938, p.119
- 94 See Lee, B.A., pp.95-97
- 95 PM to DeputyGGNZ(draft), 31 Jan 1938, EA1:260/4/2(8); see Ovendale, p.109

- 96 Berendsen to Campbell, 1 Feb 1938, EA1:264/2/7(13)
- 97 Report on 101st Council, pp.7-9; Jordan to Savage, 25 May 1938; NZ Delegate's Report on 102nd Council, 7 Oct 1938, pp.14ff, EA2:114/4/2(2); Jordan to PMD, 13 Sep 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3); LNOJ. 19th Yr. No. 11. Nov 1938. 103rd Council, 2nd meeting, 30 Sep 1938, pp.878-879; 104th Council, 5th meeting, 20 Jan 1939, pp.99-100
- 98 See Scott, p.394
- 99 LNOJ. 20th Yr. Nos.5-6. May-Jun 1939. 105th Council, 2nd meeting, 22 May 1939, p.254
- 100 Savage to Jordan, 25 May 1939, EA2:114/2/2(2)
- 101 Savage to Jordan, 10 May 1939, EA2:114/2/2(2)
- 102 Press, 16 Jan 1939, cited in Burdon, p.269 n.5; Milner, p.112; Evening Post, 14 Feb 1939; NZ Herald, 14 Feb 1939, cited in Lissington. New Zealand..., p.121
- 103 Defence Conf 1939, Report of Proceedings, Opening speech by Lord Galway, 14 Apr 1939, G48:D/6

## CHAPTER 10

## REFORMING THE COVENANT, 1936-1939

Prior to the Ethiopian crisis, New Zealand had not supported calls for the reform of the League Covenant. Allen, Parr and Wilford had all come to the conclusion that until its provisions were fully utilised during a crisis, the success or failure of the Covenant could not be properly assessed. In the meantime, they saw no reason to tamper with it. In spite of the attempt at sanctions during the Ethiopian dispute, the Labour Government believed that the Covenant had still not been properly implemented. There was certainly no need to amend it, except perhaps to strengthen its powers. Only a few weeks before Italy's annexation of Ethiopia, the government had reaffirmed in the Speech from the Throne that it was firmly attached to the principles of the Covenant and to collective security to maintain peace.<sup>1</sup> Despite the widespread international cynicism about the League following the Italian victory, Labour's commitment did not falter.

This commitment was evident during the debate on the League of Nations Sanctions Regulations Confirmation Bill on 15 May 1936. The Leader of the Opposition strongly criticised the continuation of sanctions and said it was time to take stock of the Dominion's obligations under the Covenant. Forbes asserted that the present machinery was a complete failure and the League must be overhauled since no nation was prepared to rely on it. He said it had been tried as a preserver of peace and

had been found wanting. "It has been proved to be a delusion and a snare. It has been condemned as a farce." The time had come, said Forbes, to make that "candid admission" and to devise a better way of preventing "bloodthirsty wars of aggression". Blaming idealists for the League's current problems, he said the Covenant depended on the powers being willing to use force to back the League's decisions. Since none of the Great Powers were prepared to do so, the Commonwealth had no choice but to seek a more effective form of protection. Forbes was not sure how this would be accomplished but he preferred a replacement for the League rather than a return to the old system of alliances.<sup>2</sup>

Savage found Forbes' views totally unacceptable. He denied that idealism had been the cause of the League's troubles, insisting that only when the membership of the League was "composed of idealists - the ideal being peace on earth - prepared to face up to the realities of the situation", would progress be made towards the realisation of that ideal. While acknowledging that the League needed to be reorganised, Savage said it should be with the aim of making collective security effective, not of discarding that principle. He believed that New Zealand had a role to play in the reorganisation process. To assist the government in formulating its representations to the League, he called on MPs to express their opinions on the question.<sup>3</sup>

National MPs considered that while New Zealand should remain a member of the League, the Dominion's priority should be its own defences.<sup>4</sup> Some Labour MPs, including John A. Lee and Frederick Schramm, agreed that while the League was not in a position to give effect to its great

ideals New Zealand should not neglect its defences. But in general the Labour Party's position was that the League should not be allowed to languish but must be rebuilt and strengthened. Unlike National, Labour believed that there was no acceptable alternative to collective security.<sup>5</sup>

The New Zealand Government's view was shared by only one other Commonwealth government. The South African Prime Minister stated that the trouble lay not in the Covenant but in the attitude of some of the League's most important members, who had been unwilling to take the necessary risks to ensure the obligations of the Covenant were carried out.<sup>6</sup> The rest of the Commonwealth, however strongly favoured amending the Covenant. The Irish and Canadians advocated drastic changes centring on the removal of automatic sanctions. The British Government was divided on the issue. Eden thought the League must be rebuilt but Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain preferred a system of regional pacts. The Australians believed the Covenant should be reinterpreted rather than radically amended.<sup>7</sup> If these divisions were any indication, the Assembly clearly would find it extremely difficult to reconcile the differing views on the reform issue.

The Assembly was due to reconvene on 30 June 1936 to consider the removal of sanctions against Italy and the inevitable demands for a reappraisal of the Covenant. On 15 June 1936, Parr was told that New Zealand would only agree to the removal of sanctions on the condition that the whole question of the Geneva peace structure was considered by all nations at the session in September 1936. If a committee was establish-



ed to study the issue, the government told Parr to ensure New Zealand's representation.<sup>8</sup> Although the British Cabinet agreed two days later to recommend the termination of sanctions subject to the same condition,<sup>9</sup> Parr was reluctant to insist at the Assembly that the one must be conditional on the other.<sup>10</sup> He had no wish to embarrass the British while they endeavoured to extricate themselves and the League from an increasingly untenable situation.

Since there were already strong indications that the question of the Covenant would be considered in September, Savage dropped the condition. Parr was advised, however, that if the Assembly decided against discussing the matter at its next session, New Zealand would raise it in September. Fearing that the League's tendency to procrastinate on difficult issues would lead to the postponement of the next session, Savage instructed that Parr should vigorously oppose such a move.<sup>11</sup> Parr's speech to the Assembly on 2 July 1936 closely followed Savage's instructions. New Zealand had always been a stout and unswerving protagonist of the Covenant, he said, and despite their disappointment and distress at the recent failure to curb aggression, the Dominion found it impossible to believe that the League was finished. At the next Assembly, the New Zealand delegation would co-operate with League members and non-members alike to devise methods to make the League more effective and universal.<sup>12</sup>

After a debate which revealed the diversity of opinion on the reform issue, the Assembly resolved on 4 July 1936 to invite submissions from member-states on how the Covenant might be improved. The deadline

for these would be 1 September 1936, after which the Secretary-General would collate them and report to the Assembly later that month.<sup>13</sup> There was, therefore, some urgency for New Zealand because the government had only a fortnight to prepare its submission before Berendsen and the High Commissioner-designate, Bill Jordan, were due to sail for Britain on 21 July 1936. In view of Labour's long campaign against the indifference and opposition to the League of previous New Zealand governments, Savage and his colleagues were anxious to present what they believed to be the Dominion's unique and important contribution to the work of the League. The government was too involved with domestic matters to spare a minister for Geneva but Jordan, as a former senior Labour MP, and Berendsen, the government's chief adviser on foreign policy, were considered well-qualified to present the Cabinet's views at the League.<sup>14</sup>

The Dominion's submission to the League was completed in just over a week.<sup>15</sup> A questionnaire drawn up by Berendsen was distributed to ministers on 9 July 1936, in preparation for a Cabinet meeting on 13 July 1936 at which Jordan would also be present.<sup>16</sup> It is clear from its ninety questions that Berendsen believed that League reform could not be divorced from other issues. The questionnaire not only referred to possible changes to the Covenant but also to the situation in Central Europe, arms control and the world economy. Ministers were asked whether they favoured strengthening the Covenant and, if so, how the League might be made more effective against aggressors. Should it have its own armed forces, for instance, or should each member be automatically required to assist another member under attack? Was it in the

Commonwealth's interest to bind itself to intervene against any declared aggressor? The questionnaire also covered the problem of how sanctions might be made effective, whether the international security treaties were still useful or whether regional pacts were more practicable, and what the ramifications of such pacts might be, especially for Europe.

Indicative of the government's concern with the uncertain international situation was the focus on whether these various proposals would forestall further aggressive action by Japan, Italy and Germany. An important question for the League was whether the Covenant should be separated from the postwar peace treaties. In reference to Germany, ministers were asked how past wrongs could be righted, whether territorial concessions or the return of former colonies were the solution, and how these might be achieved without conflict. The intentions of the three "predatory dictatorships" remained the biggest question of all.

Three days after the Cabinet met, Berendsen produced a concise and cogent memorandum outlining the government's views on Covenant reform.<sup>17</sup> It began by declaring that New Zealand considered that there was no material fault with the Covenant as it stood. The government believed that it was the inadequate application of the Covenant in recent disputes, rather than the Covenant itself, which was responsible for the League's difficulties. There was no justification for characterising the Covenant as an ineffective instrument until its provisions were fully applied. Nonetheless, the government was not averse to amending the Covenant so long as the purpose was to strengthen it. To this end, the government suggested that the provisions of the abortive Geneva Protocol

of 1924, which had attempted to strengthen both the coercive and arbitral powers of the Covenant, might be used as a basis for discussion.

The memorandum then focussed on the specific problems associated with the implementation of the Covenant. It acknowledged that not all League members were prepared to join in the collective application of sanctions under Article 16. In the government's view, the League would continue to be ineffective unless sanctions were made immediate and automatic, and until there was complete certainty that all League members would implement them. If this could be guaranteed, New Zealand believed it would be enough to deter aggression.

To enhance the League's ability to respond quickly and effectively to the threat of aggression, the government proposed that the League should have its own armed forces, or that members should put part or all of their armed forces at the League's disposal to form an international force in time of crisis. Fearing that regional pacts would weaken the League's system of collective security by creating conflicts of interest, the government viewed them with disfavour. As a compromise, it was prepared to support a collective system whereby all League members would accept the immediate and universal application of economic sanctions, but they would be allowed to reserve the right to restrict their obligation to use force to "defined areas". This proposal was probably inspired by the 1923 Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance.

The New Zealand Labour Party had long believed that the opinions expressed by national delegations at League meetings reflected the views

of the ruling parties rather than the general public of their respective countries. Convinced that the issue of Covenant reform was too important to be left to the whims of national politics, the government proposed that national plebiscites should be held to decide whether each League member would accept the obligations of Article 16, whether acceptance of the obligation to use force should be restricted to a defined area, and whether the League should control its own armed forces. Since it was a Labour tenet of belief that all peoples of the world wanted peace and thus would support the League as the best guarantee of that objective, there was no doubt that the overwhelming majority would vote to strengthen the Covenant. The government was aware, however, that for the League to ensure support it needed to become more accessible. The memorandum urged the League to broadcast its discussions and decisions on short-wave radio so that its activities might be understood and appreciated more widely.

As the drafters of the Geneva Protocol had done before, the government recognised that it was not enough simply to strengthen the coercive powers of the League. An effort must be made to set up adequate machinery for the ventilation and, if possible, rectification of international grievances. With the Protocol's Committee of Arbitrators in mind, the memorandum suggested that a tribunal of some kind should be established. Conscious that the origins of some of the current problems facing the international community could be traced back to the peace treaties which had ended the First World War, the government called for these treaties to be reconsidered with a view to correcting some of the injustices they contained.

Because the Covenant was an integral part of the peace treaties and the League was required to enforce the settlements, the Geneva body was dogged from the beginning by the suspicion that it was established to perpetuate the inequality between the victorious and defeated powers. By urging the separation of the Covenant from the peace treaties, New Zealand hoped to achieve two objects. The first was to promote the League as a truly universal body, not dominated by any particular member or bloc. The second object was to enable the treaties themselves to be reviewed, with the League participating as a disinterested party. New Zealand's main worry concerning the review of both the Covenant and the peace treaties was that there should not be a repeat of the situation in 1919 when only a few nations meeting in Paris imposed their wishes on the rest of the world. The government called for all states to be invited to participate in the discussions. This clause clearly demonstrated the government's concern over the German problem. The Labour movement tended to regard Nazi belligerency, the most serious manifestation of which was the reoccupation of the Rhineland in March 1936, as a product of the injustices inflicted on Germany at Versailles, and thus excusable to some degree. Savage and his colleagues were prepared, therefore, to balance firmness of principle with a willingness to contemplate peaceful change to encourage Germany to return to the League.<sup>18</sup>

Though not strictly related to the issue of Covenant reform, the New Zealand Government took the opportunity to include a call for a worldwide survey of economic conditions in its memorandum. The Labour Party believed that economic inequalities were at the root of many of the geopolitical problems which now threatened peace. But this did not

obscure the government's main point which was that the Covenant must be strengthened and the League should be universal. The memorandum concluded:

...although we believe that a collective peace system that is not supported by all the nations of the world is better than no collective peace system at all, yet we are convinced that no such system can be entirely satisfactory until it is universal and that every proper effort should be made to that end.

The problem was that some members believed that universality could only be achieved by sacrificing the coercive Articles of the Covenant, thus destroying the principle of collective security which New Zealand valued so highly. Britain was one of those states but while the British Government canvassed support for its views, it preferred not to make them public.

On 23 July 1936, MacDonald told the Dominion High Commissioners that Britain would not forward any proposals to the League but it would discuss the issues of European peace and the future of the League with the other Locarno Pact states over the next few months. The British clearly expected the Dominions to follow suit in order not to complicate the impending discussions with Germany and Italy. Parr reported that the other Dominions were likely to comply and he advised Wellington not to do anything until there was an opportunity for the Commonwealth governments to exchange views on the League's future.<sup>19</sup>

A week later, MacDonald informed Wellington that a Foreign Office memorandum outlining British thinking on the Covenant was on its way to the Dominions and he would welcome any comments they may wish to make.<sup>20</sup> In a private message to the Governor-General, he asked Lord Galway to do

everything practicable to ensure the government did not send a submission to Geneva before the Assembly met.<sup>21</sup> But even before the British memorandum arrived, there were signs that the New Zealand Government was not going to sit on its reform proposals until the Assembly opened. In Parliament on 4 August 1936, Nash said that while New Zealand wanted to co-operate with Britain, the government believed the progress of the world could only be achieved through a properly-organised League. Given the choice between "the present League to work out the possibilities of avoiding war before war comes, or another League after war", he declared that the League must be reconstituted now.<sup>22</sup> The government obviously considered the future of the League to be of such importance that it required the most urgent attention.

The Foreign Office memorandum arrived in New Zealand on 14 August 1936.<sup>23</sup> It suggested that there were two factors which were likely to determine the British Government's course of action. These were the difficulty, if not impossibility, of securing general agreement on any substantial change in the terms of the Covenant, and the fact that British policy towards the League was closely bound up with the policy towards Germany. Not wanting to take the lead on an issue so fraught with difficulty, at least not until other League members had declared their intentions, the British Government refrained from making a definite pronouncement on policy. It suggested that there should not be any change in the terms of the Covenant but rather a "reinterpretation and some redistribution of emphasis". The most important problem was how to make the commitments contained in the Covenant more acceptable and applicable to realities.



The British proposed that the unanimity rule of Article 11, which had allowed guilty parties to veto preventative action by the League, should be modified and regional pacts consistent with the Covenant should be encouraged. Britain was prepared to participate in discussions of international grievances under Article 19, including access to raw materials. It also favoured separating the Covenant from the peace treaties as an important step towards making the League more universal.<sup>24</sup> These proposals made it clear that Britain would not support the strengthening of collective security but the more immediate problem for New Zealand was less concerned with policy differences than with procedural matters.

The British Government would not send a submission to Geneva, preferring instead to present its views in the Assembly. The question was whether New Zealand would do the same. On 20 August 1936, Savage cabled Berendsen, who had just arrived in London with Jordan, asking whether in light of the British proposals, New Zealand's memorandum required modification.<sup>25</sup> Five days later, after lengthy discussions with Parr and Jordan, Berendsen cabled that they saw no reason to alter the memorandum although Parr considered some of the points, such as an international League force, to be outside practical politics. It was suggested, however, that a clause might be inserted stating that should New Zealand's proposals be generally considered not immediately practicable, the government would consider progress by stages or even alternative proposals.

The question of whether to forward the Reform Memorandum to Geneva

posed a much more serious problem. The New Zealand Government might disagree with the British Government on policy but it was loath to take any course which isolated the Dominion from the rest of the Commonwealth. Thus before they would give their advice, Berendsen, Parr and Jordan arranged to discuss the matter with the Foreign Secretary. At their meeting on 24 August 1936, Eden was asked to explain why New Zealand should not send its proposals to the League. The Dominion Government felt very strongly about the League and collective security, and was anxious to comply with the Secretary-General's request. Eden initially denied that the British Government was trying to influence the Dominions on the matter but he became more forthcoming when informed that the government was aware of MacDonald's private message to Lord Galway of 30 July.

The Foreign Secretary explained that there were two main reasons for the British attitude. They were reluctant to make definite proposals on Covenant reform before the expected meeting of the Locarno powers in October 1936 to avoid jeopardising possible German collaboration. Secondly, they wanted to co-operate with the Dominions on a joint Commonwealth scheme. The New Zealanders countered by pointing out that there was nothing in the government's proposals which could endanger Germany's collaboration and, in any case, the views of so small a Dominion could scarcely upset the equilibrium of Europe.

Eden feared that the New Zealand proposals might be interpreted by other countries as a kite flown by Britain. He could not understand why the New Zealand Government considered the matter to be so urgent since

almost none of the other League members intended to present their observations. The Foreign Secretary was sharply reminded that the whole object of the League's request for the receipt of proposals by 1 September was to enable the Assembly to discuss the issue profitably later that month. It hardly augured well for the League if the Assembly could not debate reform because the members had failed to carry out the terms of a resolution they had all previously endorsed. The meeting ended in deadlock. It is clear, however, that Parr supported the British position. When the New Zealanders discussed the question later, he suggested that a speech at the Assembly would generate more publicity for New Zealand's views than the memorandum. Jordan, Berendsen and Campbell preferred to send the memorandum. Indeed, Berendsen believed that New Zealand had a responsibility to do so.<sup>26</sup>

With the September deadline only days away, the Prime Minister's Department recommended that Savage instruct Parr to send copies of the New Zealand memorandum to the other Commonwealth governments to give them the opportunity to suggest modifications. The Prime Minister was advised that by forwarding the memorandum to Geneva, the New Zealand Government would be demonstrating its independent judgement and its opposition to the habitual procrastination of the League. It was also suggested that, given past experience, a speech in the Assembly was unlikely to be given the publicity Parr claimed and, in any case, there was a greater chance of accurately representing the Cabinet's views in a memorandum.<sup>27</sup> On 28 August 1936, Savage instructed Berendsen that the memorandum was to be delivered to the League on the due date, with the additional clause he had recommended. The other Commonwealth govern-

ments were to receive an advance copy but Savage said that in view of the British Government's attitude, "we do not consider any useful purpose will be served by further delay in the hope of effective British Commonwealth collaboration."<sup>28</sup>

The Reform Memorandum was published in the New Zealand press on 2 September 1936 and received a generally favourable reception.<sup>29</sup> The New Zealand Herald believed that "this implied zeal to assist the work of the League" was in line with New Zealand public opinion, which generally supported the government's determination to remain loyal to the Covenant.<sup>30</sup> The Otago Daily Times shared this view.<sup>31</sup> The memorandum was enthusiastically received by the LNU throughout the country.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, there was some suspicion of the government's motives in supporting rearmament because it was not explicitly linked to collective security. Only later did the LNU accept that an adequately-armed democratic front was the only answer to the deterioration of European stability.<sup>33</sup>

Of the fifty-four members of the League, New Zealand was the only member of the Commonwealth among eighteen countries which made submissions to the League.<sup>34</sup> When told by the Canadian High Commissioner that the reform issue would be on the agenda of the meeting between the Dominions Secretary and the High Commissioners on 9 September 1936, Mackenzie King replied that a discussion of New Zealand's proposals would be unprofitable at this stage but he would be prepared to discuss them at Geneva.<sup>35</sup> Jordan found his Commonwealth colleagues reluctant to go into specifics on their countries' attitudes to Covenant reform at the meeting. They did agree that universality was very important and

that those countries outside the League should be invited to participate in the reform debate. Jordan reported that there was some willingness to amend or even delete Article 16 so that the Assembly could only recommend sanctions to members, rather than the current automatic resort to force.<sup>36</sup> Savage told him to support the proposals contained in the government's memorandum vigorously at the Assembly.<sup>37</sup>

The Assembly opened on 21 September 1936 and after disposing of the Ethiopian difficulty the delegates focussed on the reform question. There was a great diversity of opinion on the future course and structure of the League. The few states which favoured major change wanted the League to assume a much more restricted role. Most favoured only minor amendments such as abandoning the unanimity rule of Article 11 so that the League might put more emphasis on the prevention of disputes. Some, including France and the Soviet Union, attached great importance to collective security; the majority preferred regional agreements to guarantee their security. Unanimity was only possible on the idea that the League must become universal.<sup>38</sup>

Britain's position was in line with that of the Foreign Office memorandum.<sup>39</sup> Echoing Eden, Mackenzie King declared that the policies of the League should conform to realities. Canada did not favour automatic commitments under the Covenant and he made it clear that North America had no wish to become involved in Europe's quarrels.<sup>40</sup> Bruce suggested that the League's greatest problem was non-universality and that attempts to implement collective security through automatic sanctions would alienate members. Australia believed that League members

would still act against an aggressor if the Covenant's obligations were made voluntary.<sup>41</sup>

Jordan addressed the Assembly on 29 September 1936. His speech had been the subject of some acrimony between himself and Berendsen. Although Jordan led New Zealand's League delegation, the Cabinet expected him to defer to Berendsen on Ethiopia and Covenant reform. In addition to the government's written instructions, Berendsen had prepared a speech for Jordan's use which strongly criticised the League's recent performance. A draft of this speech is in the Prime Minister's Department League Reform file.<sup>42</sup> Bruce Bennett believes that this document, which he calls the 'Preparatory Document', was written in May or June 1936 and was a precursor of the Reform Memorandum. This view is based on an assertion made by J.H. Witheford, who was involved in the preparation of New Zealand's official war history, in a letter to Miss J.R. McKenzie of the New Zealand High Commission in Canberra in 1949.<sup>43</sup> Witheford's claim and Bennett's interpretation are incorrect. Not only does the document refer to the June 1936 Assembly, which closed in early July 1936, in the past tense but its content accords with Berendsen's account of a stronger version of Jordan's speech, and its structure is very similar to that of the speech which Jordan delivered.

Berendsen's draft was deliberately provocative. On the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, for example, it said: "...though...the League came to life, its resuscitation was lengthy and laboured, and...when restored to consciousness, was more than half paralysed in every faculty except that of the tongue." The appeasement policies of Britain and France were

also explicitly condemned. Berendsen declared that unless the League was made effective, all members, New Zealand included, "will be entitled to consider themselves no longer bound to take part in such an ineffective and dangerous association and will have to consider the desirability of resigning from the League." Jordan thought the speech too strong and wanted to take a much softer line. Berendsen threatened to inform the government of such unauthorised action. A compromise was reached whereby Jordan would deliver the original speech but in a slightly watered-down form. This incident may have been responsible for the rift which developed between the two men. Extremely jealous of his dignity and independence, Jordan undoubtedly resented Berendsen's efforts to make him toe the line.<sup>44</sup>

Jordan began his speech by expressing New Zealand's acute concern about the future. He warned that "unless war can be outlawed, civilization as we know it may be in danger of extinction, millions of our fellow human beings may be doomed to untold misery and degradation, and chaos, war and barbarism may take the place of law and order." Such a catastrophe could be avoided, he said, if the present drift of the League was arrested. New Zealand had witnessed with consternation the League's ominous failure to preserve peace in recent years. In the case of the Ethiopian dispute the disappointment was all the greater because the initial display of unanimity had raised hope that a virile collective peace system was possible. The sorry reality was that fifty nations, acting together for the first time in defence of the Covenant, had allowed themselves to be deterred from their plain duty. Jordan insisted that New Zealand could not remain silent while the League's

continued ineffectiveness deprived mankind of any real sense of security. There must be a return to the principles of the Covenant. He then went on to outline the Dominion's reform proposals.<sup>45</sup>

Savage believed that New Zealand had put a strong case to the League and congratulated Jordan on his speech.<sup>46</sup> But in Parliament the reaction of National MPs was negative. The government was taken to task for committing the Dominion to the automatic implementation of sanctions, including the despatch of naval and military expeditionary forces, if the League declared a state to be an aggressor.<sup>47</sup> Forbes, Hargest and William Endean asked how Savage could reconcile Jordan's statement with Labour's previous opposition to sending troops overseas. Hargest and Coates thought it absurd for such a militarily-weak nation to commit itself to sanctions when only a few League members, and none of the other Commonwealth countries, would do likewise. Coates charged that the government had adopted a policy of isolation and he was concerned that it would put the Dominion in a very awkward position. Forbes scoffed that New Zealand could not fulfil its pledge without British equipment and Royal Navy protection, and he rebuked the government for making such extraordinary proposals without holding a referendum. Harold Dickie went so far as to suggest that New Zealand did not deserve its seat on the League Council if it was to make proposals so obviously at odds with the views of the British Government.<sup>48</sup>

Savage replied that if the policy enunciated by Jordan at Geneva was adopted by the League, the possibility of war could be considerably reduced. He insisted that the idea of sending a force to Europe was the



last thing on the government's mind when drawing up the memorandum. Minister of Lands Frank Langstone pointed out that with modern warfare it was quite possible that the conflict would be over before New Zealand's soldiers arrived. He felt it would be better for the Dominion's men to be employed at home producing supplies for those who did the fighting. He denied that the government had deliberately taken a stand against the British Government but New Zealand had to "indicate that she had a mind of her own on the great question of war and peace..." Suggesting it was more probable that New Zealand would be led into war by Britain than vice versa, Langstone argued that the Dominion had the same responsibility as any other member to support the League in an effort to reduce the possibility of war. Jordan was merely advocating that the nations of the world carry out what they gave lip-service to, said Savage, who pointedly reminded Forbes that he had never called a referendum on any issue when he was Prime Minister. Challenging the National Party to produce an alternative to the Reform Memorandum, he said that the government would be quite prepared to listen.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, the Assembly had decided to establish a special committee to study the Covenant. This committee would not only consider whether to amend the Covenant's contentious Articles but would also discuss how the Covenant could be reconciled with the Pact of Paris and the Treaty of Non-Aggression and Conciliation signed by the American nations at Rio de Janeiro in 1933.<sup>50</sup> A sub-committee was appointed to prepare reports for the main committee to consider at the next Assembly. The Committee of Twenty-Eight, as it became known, included Britain, Canada and New Zealand. On Jordan's suggestion, it was given the power to call

a special session of the Assembly so the matter could be resolved without delay.<sup>51</sup>

The first meeting of the Committee of Twenty-Eight in December 1936 disabused Jordan of any notion that the reform question would have a quick resolution. While acknowledging that the committee's task was of "gigantic" proportions, he found its preoccupation with procedural matters frustrating. He pleaded with the committee to start dealing with matters of substance.<sup>52</sup> Yet he was fully aware that New Zealand's proposals would not find much favour. Savage was assured this would not lessen Jordan's determination to present the government's case as vigorously as possible. But it is clear he was under pressure from the British to moderate his stand.<sup>53</sup> Even Berendsen was pessimistic about the chances of the proposals being accepted. Obviously discouraged by what he had heard at the Assembly, he told Fraser that a plan for stronger measures to reform the League based on delegating a large measure of sovereignty to the League was unpalatable to most of the members. Berendsen believed that New Zealand could not press for such a plan with any realistic hope of success without the existence of almost universal goodwill.<sup>54</sup>

The reservations of its advisers did not affect the government's resolve to pursue the proposals. Savage and his colleagues were convinced that they had the support of the majority of New Zealanders, and they received the wholehearted backing of the Labour Party at its annual conference in late March 1937.<sup>55</sup> While in Europe during late 1936/early 1937, Nash took every opportunity to promote New Zealand's views on the

League.<sup>56</sup> In a broadcast from Geneva in January 1937, he said that the League must not become merely an umbrella for regional pacts. The New Zealand Government was determined to support collective security and it believed that the Covenant should only be amended in order to strengthen it.<sup>57</sup> With the forthcoming Imperial Conference in mind, he attempted to publicise New Zealand's point of view as a viable alternative to the emasculated League the British Government was promoting. Addressing the Association of British Chambers of Commerce in April 1937, Nash said that the continued peaceful existence of the Commonwealth was due to a form of collective security. Blaming the current problems facing the international community on the failure to support this principle, he declared that it was only collective security which would preserve world peace.<sup>58</sup>

Nash's efforts to influence British public opinion were motivated by the knowledge that if New Zealand's reform proposals were to have any chance of being adopted, they must have Britain's backing. In December 1936, Australia signalled its intention to raise the issue of the League at the Imperial Conference the following May.<sup>59</sup> Though it realised support was unlikely, the New Zealand Government informed London on 15 January 1937 that it too attached the utmost importance to the discussions on the League.<sup>60</sup> Berendsen offered little hope that these discussions would result in British co-operation. He noted that Britain had not honoured its international commitments in recent years. Citing what he termed the "hesitations and extraordinary alterations" of British policy over the previous six years, Berendsen argued that a large portion of the blame for the League's failure must be placed on the British Govern-

ment. He noted that in the discussions on a replacement agreement for the Locarno Pact during 1936, the League had played no part and collective security was not even an issue. He saw the British Government "groping in confusion and uncertainty for a definite attitude on foreign affairs." New Zealand and Britain clearly had completely different conceptions of the meaning of the League system and this affected their respective reform proposals. Berendsen believed that agreement between the two governments at the Imperial Conference would prove impossible.<sup>61</sup>

Berendsen's pessimism was well-founded. From the start the New Zealand delegation discovered that there was a wide gulf between their views on the future of the League and those held by the other delegations. The rest of the Commonwealth favoured a universal, non-coercive League but they did not agree on how this object might be achieved. The Canadian Prime Minister held the most extreme view, calling for Articles 10 and 16 to be removed from the Covenant so that the League would be left with nothing more than moral authority. Canada, Britain and South Africa asserted that the League's power to impose sanctions should be eliminated. The Australians suggested only that the Covenant's obligations should be reinterpreted. Rather than automatic sanctions, Bruce favoured consultation between the League members on the form of action to be taken in the event of a threat to peace. He agreed with the South Africans that it was vital for the Covenant to be separated from the peace treaties and he supported the concept of regional pacts. Indeed, one of Australia's major goals at the conference was to secure acceptance of its proposal for a Pacific Pact.<sup>62</sup>

Having already castigated the Commonwealth for failing to honour its obligations to the League during the recent international crises, Savage not surprisingly took a different line.<sup>63</sup> He argued that to change the League would be a fatal blunder. There was no guarantee that the League would command more widespread support by weakening the Covenant. It was just as likely that a conflict of interests between the powers would prevent agreement to exercise moral pressure as it had prevented the proper application of sanctions. Savage warned that the most likely outcome would be the estrangement of the small states and a return by the Great Powers to the discredited system of alliances and the balance of power. To abolish sanctions would destroy the League, he said.<sup>64</sup>

Given this deep division on such a fundamental issue, it was inevitable that the formulation of the conference's declaration on foreign affairs would be far from straightforward. In fact it took six days of wrangling, and as many drafts, before the final version was approved.<sup>65</sup> The Commonwealth declared that its first objective was the preservation of peace and thus its armaments would never be used for any purpose inconsistent with the Covenant or the Pact of Paris. It was stated that the settlement of disputes should be by methods of co-operation, joint enquiry and conciliation. Savage rejected a general condemnation of the use of force because it ruled out military sanctions by the League. His objection was met and at the same time somewhat obscured by a declaration against recourse to the use of force "between nation and nation". The Commonwealth approved of the concept of regional agreements but Savage insisted on a proviso that such agreements were not to conflict

with the Covenant. It was stated further that in order to enlarge the membership of the League, the Covenant should be separated from the peace treaties.

The most serious clash had occurred over a passage which emphasised that the Commonwealth governments would conduct their foreign policies "in accordance with the principles of the Covenant". Mackenzie King objected strongly, saying that Canada would not base its policy on collective security by sanctions. Savage hit back by asking if the members of the League were not prepared to govern themselves by the principles of the Covenant, who would? He bluntly accused the Canadians of evading their international obligations and of wanting to destroy the League. "As long as the gun was unloaded they were willing to support the League," he said, "but the moment the gun was loaded they would not have anything to do with it." King angrily denied the charge but he and the South African Prime Minister were adamant that they would only agree to base their governments' policies on the "aims and ideals of the League". They insisted that if their amendment was not accepted then the passage would have to be dropped. Savage retorted that if this happened, he would have nothing further to do with the communique. Stalemate was reached and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain hastily adjourned the meeting.

On the following day Savage was more willing to compromise. The New Zealanders had come under pressure from the British and the Australians to moderate their position in order to maintain the appearance of Commonwealth unity. Savage was prepared to accept the amendment so long

as a sentence was added stating that New Zealand reserved the right to advocate and support its statement of policy submitted to the September 1936 Assembly. Concerned that this would indicate disagreement within the Commonwealth, the other delegates persuaded Savage to accept a footnote which recognised the right of all governments to support their statements made at that time. Savage also agreed not to expound his views in his final statement to the conference, because it would be published. The communique was saved but it could hardly be said to represent a common front.<sup>66</sup>

The New Zealand delegates were undoubtedly dissatisfied that the Commonwealth had not wholeheartedly backed the League and collective security. When he later reported to Parliament, Savage expressed disappointment with the attitude of the conference.<sup>67</sup> Yet, despite the isolation of New Zealand's position and its lack of influence, the inclusion of a separate qualification in a document intended above all else to demonstrate Commonwealth unity, was no mean achievement. In a broad hint that New Zealand was responsible for the footnote, Savage told the House on 29 September 1937 that "I felt it was not sufficient to go twelve or thirteen thousand miles to listen to my own voice and the voices of others for several weeks in the United Kingdom and then to come back here and be muzzled for all time about what we thought ought to happen."<sup>68</sup> But while he believed that New Zealand had the right to express its own views, Savage acknowledged that care must be taken not to cause difficulties for the rest of the Commonwealth.<sup>69</sup> Answering criticism that the government's support for the League was damaging the Dominion's relations with Britain, Nash gave an assurance that in the

event of war, New Zealand's first loyalty would be to the Commonwealth, not the League.<sup>70</sup> Of course the government still hoped that by reforming the Covenant, the League would be able to prevent such an eventuality. But Jordan was not optimistic that the Committee of Twenty-Eight would make any progress at its second session beginning on 10 September 1937.

The committee met just before the Assembly opened. Jordan noted that some of the reform proposals lacked the fullness and "helpful conscientiousness" of the New Zealand memorandum. Nevertheless, their conflicting views confirmed his belief that in the present international climate it was futile to expect any agreement on changes to the Covenant, and that "with all its defects, the Covenant substantially as it stands will have to serve nations yet awhile..." There was, however, general acceptance of the desirability of separating the Covenant from the peace treaties. Recognising that this was perhaps the only issue on which progress could be made, Jordan proposed the establishment of a drafting committee to prepare a resolution. A Committee of Ten Jurists, which included Campbell, actually went further and drafted the changes to the Covenant required for implementing the separation. But it did not report until the Assembly was nearing adjournment so its proposals were held over until the following year.<sup>71</sup>

New Zealand's delegates had found little sympathy for their point of view at the Assembly. Campbell recorded his perturbation when during a conversation with a Scandinavian delegate he was asked incredulously: "Collective security - do you still believe in that?"<sup>72</sup> Because



of the prevalence of this attitude, Jordan found the League very depressing. He told Savage that the League was inoperative because the members wanted it to be inoperative, and he believed there was little chance of New Zealand's policy being adopted.<sup>73</sup> As for the contention of some delegates that the League could regain in the technical sphere the prestige it had lost in the political sphere, Jordan dismissed it as nonsense. "Better by far [to] recognise that all our strivings after human betterment will be [in] vain unless we do collectively secure peace," he said.<sup>74</sup> Jordan considered that while circumstances were against the League, it would be a disservice for New Zealand to press unduly proposals which would receive little or no support.<sup>75</sup> Even Savage was becoming discouraged. He told a LNU deputation on 14 October 1937 that the League was depressing because "people go there without the slightest intention of giving effect to the principles underlying the Covenant."<sup>76</sup> Despite New Zealand's continued support for its principles, the trend at Geneva was beginning to take its toll.

The third session of the Committee of Twenty-Eight began on 31 January 1938. Whatever his private reservations, Jordan told the committee that New Zealand would do all it could towards producing a Covenant which was acceptable to all but he warned against "framing a Covenant which will conform to the present confusion" merely to deal with immediate problems.<sup>77</sup> His comments formed part of a discussion of two reports prepared by Lord Cranborne on universality and collaboration between the League and non-member states. As basic premises of his reports, Cranborne accepted that the League was coercive in respect to what action its members could take during a crisis, and that universal-

ity was never a primary objective. The parallel with the official British position on the reform issue is obvious. In his report to Wellington, Jordan questioned the validity of Cranborne's premises. He asked: "If as individuals we join of our own free will an organisation with rules providing that certain explicitly stated action will be taken in defined circumstances, can we complain of coercion when the circumstances call for the appropriate action? Obviously not," he asserted. As for universality, Jordan argued that the whole ideal of, and practical necessity for, an international authority rested on the assumption that at least one nation would not co-operate with the rest. It followed, therefore, that the League's effectiveness could not be dependent on whether it was truly universal.

When the committee concluded its discussions on 2 February 1938, it remained divided. The report to the Assembly made no definite recommendations for the revision of the Covenant.<sup>78</sup> Frustrated by the lack of progress, the British Government told the Dominions on 30 July 1938 that because many members already regarded the sanctions system as suspended, it was time that there was an honest avowal of the League's limitations. The British proposed that there should be a temporary definition of the limits of members' obligations until the Covenant could be applied fully once more. It would be left to individual members to decide as to what extent they would accept the obligations of Article 16 and a greater emphasis would be placed on the League's conciliation facilities under Articles 11 and 19.<sup>79</sup>

Asked for his views by Savage, Jordan said that while he considered

there should not be any substantial changes to the Covenant, he also believed there should be more emphasis on conciliation. On the question of sanctions he thought that it would be better if each member took responsibility for imposing sanctions but he feared that a declaration disavowing automatic obligations would be interpreted as a repudiation of all obligations. Jordan felt that the British were unwise to over-emphasise the difficulties and divisions which affected the League, for such a speech to the Assembly coming from so important a member would only compound the existing problems.<sup>80</sup>

The New Zealand Government advised London on 11 August 1938 that it could not support the proposed resolution. Recalling the Dominion's opposition to a similar proposal to the Council regarding the recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia the previous May, the government said that it deprecated any procedure which was not authorised by the Covenant. New Zealand was in favour of putting greater stress on conciliation but without the means to ensure the League's settlement was carried out, the government doubted whether the state found to be in the wrong would voluntarily abide by its terms. An aggrieved state might be encouraged to rectify a generally-accepted injustice by forceful means. But the main reason that New Zealand could not accept the resolution was that by weakening the provisions of the Covenant further, it would almost guarantee that the Covenant as it stood would never be implemented. Jordan would be instructed to reaffirm New Zealand's adherence to the Covenant and then abstain from voting.<sup>81</sup>

The British Government was not happy with the decision and tried to

persuade Wellington to reconsider. It was not the prospect of the Dominion's abstention which most disturbed the British. Rather it was the possibility that an emotive speech by Jordan in defence of the Covenant would encourage others to oppose the resolution. The British Government believed that there would be more defections from the League if the resolution was not approved. The implication was that New Zealand would be contributing to the League's destruction if Jordan openly opposed the British delegation in this matter.<sup>82</sup>

Two days before the Assembly opened on 12 September 1938, London was told that New Zealand would not change its stand.<sup>83</sup> But as a concession, Jordan was instructed to express the Dominion's views in language as moderate and conciliatory as possible.<sup>84</sup> The British were aware that the debate on the Covenant would not be the only opportunity for New Zealand to express its potentially embarrassing viewpoint during the Assembly. Because the Council began its third session of the year a few days before the Assembly convened, it was customary for the President of the Council to open the Assembly. To the dismay of the British, it was Jordan's turn to chair the Council.<sup>85</sup>

Although his opening speech contained references to New Zealand's views on the League, Jordan recognised that the occasion demanded restraint.<sup>86</sup> He told Savage later that he was necessarily guarded because "it would have been useless to make a provocative speech condemning war and advocating peace. The word peace is heard here every few minutes, but it seems to have a doubtful meaning."<sup>87</sup> Speaking firstly on Covenant reform, Jordan put the blame for the League's failures on the

governments of its member-states rather than on the Covenant. New Zealand believed that the Covenant formed the minimum of any real system of international co-operation to secure peace, and it would be a betrayal of those who had died in the Great War if the League should be allowed to die.

Alluding to Labour's commitment to social welfare in New Zealand, Jordan reminded the delegates that progress towards individual welfare and security was incompatible with the pursuit of warlike purposes. He also made a thinly-disguised plea for a return to collective security, saying that in the present conditions individual nations could no longer attain security through their own resources. To avoid disaster and hardship, argued Jordan, nations must recognise that they may have to share the risk of others. Thus the current crisis in Europe was of concern to all nations, not just to those immediately affected. Jordan did not refer to the Czechoslovakian situation directly but in a clear warning to Germany he said that "if peace is violated it will not be possible for any who violate it to count on the neutrality of even those countries that may appear to be most remote."<sup>88</sup>

That Jordan even alluded to the Czechoslovakian crisis stunned his audience.<sup>89</sup> His absence from London during September 1938, when the crisis was at its height and the other Dominion High Commissioners were engaged in frequent discussions with British ministers, could be interpreted as an attempt to distance New Zealand from a plan it did not approve of and could not change.<sup>90</sup> At the very least, the government probably thought that Jordan would be more usefully and honourably

employed as President of the Council than he could be in London. Whatever the case, by referring to the crisis in his speech Jordan was pointedly reminding the Assembly of how little influence the League now exercised over international affairs. Clearly he was suggesting that if the League was to be restored to its proper role, it was the attitude of its members and not the Covenant that must change. Thus when reporting on a meeting of the Commonwealth delegates held the next day, he expressed regret that the British still intended to put their reform proposals before the Assembly. With little likelihood of agreement, Jordan felt that a discussion of political principles and the Covenant would not be helpful, and he would have preferred such matters to be put off for the present.<sup>91</sup> In Wellington, the government had come to the same conclusion.<sup>92</sup>

As Jordan expected, the members of the Sixth Committee, to which the British proposals were referred, held sharply conflicting opinions.<sup>93</sup> There was, however, significant support for the suspension of the automatic obligations of the Covenant and the repeal of the unanimity rule in regard to Article 11. Campbell said that New Zealand did not consider the current discussion would serve any useful purpose. But fearing his silence would be misconstrued, he repeated his government's faith in the Covenant and declared New Zealand's opposition to any resolution, interpretation or declaration which might weaken its principles. The Dominion would, however, support the amendment of Article 11 and the separation of the Covenant from the peace treaties.<sup>94</sup>

After a lengthy discussion a draft report was presented to the

committee. It recommended the amendment of Article 11 and approved the protocol containing the amendments necessary to separate the Covenant from the treaties drawn up by the Committee of Ten Jurists the previous year.<sup>95</sup> Though the resolution on Article 16 stressed that there was no intention to amend the Article, it suggested that the general opposition to compulsory military sanctions had created a situation whereby it was accepted that the Article was no longer fully operative, and should be recognised as such. Campbell took strong exception to the implication that the declarations and observations on Article 16 by League members somehow constituted a de facto amendment. He said that the only way an Article could be amended was under the provisions of Article 26 and he had the offending clause changed. He was supported by Spain, China and the Soviet Union. The final resolution still acknowledged that many members believed that sanctions should not be compulsory but the committee refrained from giving any support to any reinterpretation of Article 16 along those lines.<sup>96</sup>

By approving the Sixth Committee's proposal to refer the matter back to the member-governments, the Assembly effectively shelved the question of amending Article 16. The amendment to Article 11 fared no better. Jordan supported dropping the unanimity rule to enable the Council to act promptly in a dispute, but the resolution was lost because some delegates feared it would lead to the abandonment of the rule in all League decisions.<sup>97</sup> The only concrete achievement after two years of debate on Covenant reform was the approval of the protocol to separate the Covenant from the peace treaties.<sup>98</sup> New Zealand signed on 18 January 1939 and deposited its ratification on 5 June 1939.<sup>99</sup>

The attempt to inject more 'realism' into the League's work by reforming the Covenant had failed. As the international situation worsened, the proceedings at Geneva lost their relevance and the League was reduced to the role of a spectator. The Munich settlement showed how irrelevant the League had become. The New Zealand Government was relieved that war had been averted but it regretted the manner in which peace had been preserved.<sup>100</sup> Jordan saw Munich as a setback for the League. He believed that some of the Central European states would loosen their ties with Geneva as a result.<sup>101</sup>

In Wellington too, Berendsen was suggesting that New Zealand's commitment to the League needed reconsideration. In a memorandum to Savage on 14 October 1938, he argued that a general condition of the Dominion's foreign policy based on the Covenant had always been that it would be subject to review should the survival of the Commonwealth be threatened. Berendsen was certain such a threat now existed and he urged the government to put the interests of the Commonwealth before its internationalist principles. He stated that "it may well be that we are at this juncture forced to abandon, until a more favourable opportunity, all considerations except those of naked self-interest and self-defence." Although he asserted that this need not involve an admission of error or a weakening of New Zealand's support of the principles of international right and justice, Berendsen was convinced that the survival of these principles depended on the Commonwealth surviving the perilous times ahead.<sup>102</sup> The implication was that the government should exercise caution at Geneva and avoid taking a position which openly conflicted with that of the rest of the Commonwealth.



The Dominion's conflicting loyalties were soon put to the test. New Zealand was informed on 24 December 1938 that Britain proposed to denounce the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The British Government feared that in the event of war the General Act could be used by neutrals to restrict British belligerent rights at sea. The British had always insisted on the widest possible interpretation but if the matter was referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice, London was sure the narrower European view would be imposed, with a crippling effect on British naval activities. To avoid this possibility, Britain decided not to renew its adherence to the General Act when it expired in August 1939. The Dominions were asked to do likewise.<sup>103</sup>

Berendsen shared the British concern but he believed that denouncing the whole instrument was going too far. Coming as it did after a long series of retreats from collective security and international law and order, the abandonment of the impartial judgement of all disputes would have, in his view, a deplorable effect. Instead, Berendsen suggested an additional reservation - excluding from the operation of the General Act all questions relating to belligerent rights at sea during wartime - when the Commonwealth countries came to renew their adherence.<sup>104</sup>

The government was not convinced, however, that any further reservations were justified. London was told on 26 January 1939 that despite the disadvantages, New Zealand would accept the obligations of the General Act for another five years as a demonstration of the government's

faith in international law and order and collective security.<sup>105</sup> Canada, Australia and France also believed the General Act's advantages outweighed its disadvantages, which prompted the British Government to reconsider its position.<sup>106</sup> Wellington was advised on 10 February 1939 that Britain was prepared to continue its accession subject to the reservation that the General Act would not cover disputes arising out of events occurring in wartime.<sup>107</sup> The New Zealand Government was not entirely happy with the compromise since it went further than Berendsen's proposal, but three days later it signalled the Dominion's acceptance.<sup>108</sup>

By the end of 1938, the government was trying to maintain some kind of balance between New Zealand's commitment to the League and the Dominion's loyalty to the Commonwealth. This task was not made any easier by Jordan's continued outspokenness. At a meeting between the Dominion High Commissioners and the Dominions Secretary, Sir Thomas Inskip, in April 1939, Jordan strongly criticised the British Government's handling of Albania's appeal to the League after Italy invaded its territory.<sup>109</sup> He was appalled by Lord Halifax's statement that Britain did not think that Albania was important enough to start a war over. He pointed out sharply that over the past three years other countries had been sacrificed to aggressors for the same reason, and this had still not preserved peace. He was also critical of the apparent British preference for bargaining with the Fascist dictators instead of trying to cultivate the Soviet Union as an ally.<sup>110</sup> At Geneva in May 1939, Jordan did not try to hide his displeasure when the Secretary-General gave the Albanian appeal short shrift. Avenol took the extraordinary position that the

letters from King Zog and the Albanian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris did not constitute a proper appeal to the League and thus he would only place them before the Council members for their information. The Secretary-General was left in no doubt that Jordan felt this response to be totally inadequate.<sup>111</sup>

But Jordan's rhetoric was increasingly out of tune with his own government's thinking. In May 1939 he was given a mild rebuke after strongly supporting the Chinese appeal before the Council.<sup>112</sup> In the Speech from the Throne on 28 June 1939, the Governor-General declared that while New Zealand remained firmly attached to the principles of the Covenant, the government had been forced to recognise that a full and effective application of the Covenant was impracticable for the time being.<sup>113</sup> When Jordan wanted to make a speech to the forthcoming Assembly vigorously expounding New Zealand's views and calling for an international conference to discuss the economic impediments to peace, the government demurred. Acting Prime Minister Fraser told him that it would be unwise to take any special stand at the Assembly at present; the best course would be silence.<sup>114</sup>

As it happened, the proceedings of the Assembly and the Council, which were postponed until December 1939 because of the outbreak of war, had become so divorced from reality that there was little else Jordan could do. Faced with an appeal from Finland as a result of the invasion by the Soviet Union, the Assembly recommended that the aggressor be expelled from the League.<sup>115</sup> New Zealand could not of course condone such aggression, even from a former ally in the League, so Jordan was

instructed to vote in favour of expulsion.<sup>116</sup> He was grateful perhaps that New Zealand's term on the Council expired before he was required to participate in this charade.<sup>117</sup> Now only a pale reflection of its former self, the League was prepared to do what had been previously unthinkable when the Fascist states were involved.

The outbreak of the Second World War was the final nail in the League's coffin. While it was not pronounced dead until 1946, the League's primary function of keeping the peace had ceased years before. The Ethiopian debacle convinced many members that the League had failed them. From New Zealand's perspective, it seemed rather more that the members had failed the League. From the beginning, New Zealand's approach to the reform issue was fundamentally different to that of the majority of the other members. Labour did not accept that the Covenant should be watered-down. Instead, the government aimed to strengthen the Covenant to give the League a position of authority and prestige from which it could regulate international affairs. But in the atmosphere of "suspicion, fear and intolerance" which pervaded Europe, such ambitions were out of place.<sup>118</sup> As the League became irrelevant, so the discussion of reform became an exercise in futility.

The machinery at Geneva may have been flawed but the principles were sound. Labour's commitment to these principles remained firm. Savage declared in November 1939 that the ultimate war aims of those countries allied with New Zealand against the Fascist dictators should include: outlawing aggression; the substitution of discussion and negotiation for force; the guarantee of each nation's security; universal

disarmament; the restoration of respect for the sanctity of contracts; the revival of the League of Nations or a substitute; the solution of economic questions; and an increase in the welfare of the mass of the people.<sup>119</sup> In other words, the war simply confirmed what the government had stated in its Reform Memorandum – that peace was only possible if each nation gave up some element of its sovereignty in favour of an international body under a system of collective security.

## REFERENCES

- 1 NZPD, 26 Mar 1936, Vol.244, p.5
- 2 NZPD, 15 May 1936, Vol.245, pp.150-152
- 3 Ibid, pp.152-155; see 'Notes on the League of Nations Regulations Confirmation Bill' (notes for Savage's speech prepared by Nash & Berendsen), nd, EA1:260/4/2(6)
- 4 NZPD, 15 May 1936, Vol.245, pp.160,165,171-173,179
- 5 Ibid, pp.157-159,163,167-170
- 6 Carlton. The Dominions..., p.35
- 7 Carter, pp.238-239; Middlemas, p.52
- 8 Savage to Parr, 15 Jun 1936, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 9 SSDA to GGNZ, 17 Jun 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)
- 10 Parr to PMD, 30 Jun 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)
- 11 Savage to Parr, 1 Jul 1936, EA1:260/4/2(7)
- 12 LNOJ. SS151. 16th Assembly. 22nd Plenary meeting, 2 Jul 1936, p.49
- 13 Report on 16th Assembly, passim, EA2:114/3/2(7); Parr to Savage, 5 Jul 1936; Savage to Parr, 6 Jul 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 14 Savage to Parr, 29 Jun 1936, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 15 Berendsen told Ben Cockram on 26 August 1936 that the Cabinet had devoted "every day for a week" to the subject. Ross, A. Reluctant Dominion or Dutiful Daughter?: New Zealand and the Commonwealth in the Inter-war Years. In Collected Seminar Papers on the Dominions Between the Wars. University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 13, Oct 1970-Mar 1971, p.75
- 16 PMO to D.G. Sullivan(Min.Industries & Commerce), 9 Jul 1936, EA2:114/1/1(4). See questionnaires completed by Sullivan(EA2:114/1/1(4)), Nash(Nash Papers 2545/0461-469), and a questionnaire which seems to indicate the consensus of Cabinet opinion(EA2:114/1/11(1)). An updated version of this questionnaire was drawn up when Cabinet considered New Zealand's position before the Assembly in September 1938. EA1:58/1/1(1A)
- 17 Savage to Sec-Gen, 16 Jul 1936, EA1:58/1/1(1A). The Memorandum was published in AJHR. 1936, A-5A
- 18 Wood, p.91

- 19 Parr to PMD, 23 Jul 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 20 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Jul 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 21 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Jul 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 22 NZPD, 4 Aug 1936, Vol.246, p.265. See Savage's statement. 13 Aug 1936, pp.479-480
- 23 SSDA to GGNZ, 24 Jul 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 24 'Notes on the British Government Memorandum on the Reform of the League of Nations' (probably prepared by Alister McIntosh, who headed the PMD information section) nd, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 25 Savage to Berendsen, 20 Aug 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 26 Berendsen to PMD, 25 Aug 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 27 'Reform of the League. Notes on Mr Berendsen's Cable 25th August, 1936', nd, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 28 Savage to Berendsen, 28 Aug 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 29 Savage to Jordan, 2 Sep 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 30 NZ Herald, 3 Sep 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 31 Carter, p.259
- 32 Peters, K. New Zealand's Attitudes to the Reform of the League of Nations: The Background of the Memorandum to the Secretary-General, 16 July 1936. New Zealand Journal of History. 6.1, Apr 1972, p.96; E.F. Denton-Leech(Sec.Otago LNU) to F. Jones(Postmaster-General), 7 Oct 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 33 Attwood, pp.91-94
- 34 Report on 17th Assembly, p.2, EA2:114/3/2(7); see Sec-Gen to PMNZ, 8 Sep 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 35 Massey to King, 2,3 Sep 1936; King to Massey, 8 Sep 1936, DCER. VI, pp.900-903; see BPD.HC. 5th Series, 16 Dec 1936, Vol.318, Cols.2430-2431
- 36 Jordan to PMD, 10 Sep 1936; SSDA to GGNZ, 11 Sep 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 37 Savage to Jordan, 14 Sep 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1)
- 38 Report on 17th Assembly, pp.2-4,16-19, EA2:114/3/2(7)
- 39 LNOJ. SS155. 17th Assembly. 6th Plenary meeting, 25 Sep 1936, pp.44-47

- 40 Ibid, 9th Plenary meeting, 29 Sep 1936, pp.67-70. On Canada's attitude to reform see Neatby. III, pp.173-175; Memo by Christie, 4 Nov 1936, DCER. VI, pp.906-910; Veatch, pp.170-174; Ovendale, p.27
- 41 LNOJ. SS155. 17th Assembly. 10th Plenary meeting, 29 Sep 1936, pp. 74-77. On Australia's attitude to reform see Andrews. Isolationism..., pp.66-68; Memo for Delegation to 1937 Imp Conf, 11 Sep 1936, DAFP. I, pp.18-28
- 42 Memorandum of 57 points by Berendsen, nd, 8p, EA2:114/1/11(1). This document is reproduced, with minor textual inaccuracies, in Bennett, Appendix
- 43 Bennett, pp.15ff; Witheford to McKenzie, 22 Feb 1949, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 44 Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4
- 45 LNOJ. SS155. 17th Assembly. 10th Plenary meeting, 29 Sep 1936, pp. 78-80
- 46 Savage to Jordan, 12 Oct 1936, PM16:1
- 47 NZPD, 1 Oct 1936, Vol.247, p.518
- 48 Ibid, 21 Oct 1936, pp.874,876-880,882; see Point Blank, 15 Oct 1936, Labour Party Papers 270:205
- 49 NZPD, 21 Oct 1936, Vol.247, pp.874,876-877,881-883
- 50 LNOJ. SS154. Documents Relating to the Question of the Application of the Principles of the Covenant, EA2:114/1/11(2)
- 51 LNOJ. SS162. 17th Assembly. Special Main Cmte(Question of the Application of the Principles of the Covenant), 2nd meeting, 9 Oct 1936, pp.24-25,28-30
- 52 Jordan to Savage, 5 Jan 1937, EA2:114/1/11(2); see King to Riddell, 12 Dec 1936, DCER. VI, pp.910-911
- 53 Jordan to Savage, 21 Oct 1936, PM16:1
- 54 Berendsen to Fraser, 17 Nov 1936, EA2:114/1/11(1); Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4
- 55 NZ Labour Party 21st Annual Conf, Wellington, 29 Mar 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:357
- 56 See Chatham House Seventh Annual Dinner. Proceedings. 1 Dec 1936. Royal Institute of International Affairs, London
- 57 NZ Herald, 26 Jan 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:207
- 58 Standard, 6 May 1937, Labour Party Papers 270:209



- 59 SSDA to GGNZ, 21 Dec 1936, EA1:153/18/1(1)
- 60 GGNZ to SSDA, 13 Jan 1937, EA1:153/18/1(1)
- 61 Imp Conf 1937, NZ Delegates Briefs. 1.I. Foreign Affairs. Europe. 'Inconsistencies in Recent British Foreign Policy', EA11:68; 1.III. Miscellaneous. 'Locarno', EA11:70. The latter was based on 'Draft Notes on the Proposed Locarno Conf', c.16 Oct 1936, EA2:111/15/1(1)
- 62 Imp Conf 1937, Principal Delegates, 1st meeting, 19 May 1937; 3rd meeting, 21 May 1937; 12th meeting, 3 Jun 1937; 13th meeting, 4 Jun 1937; E29. Suggestion for Regional Pact in the Pacific, 28 May 1937, G40:8
- 63 Imp Conf 1937, Principal Delegates, 3rd meeting, 21 May 1937, G40:8
- 64 Ibid, 13th meeting, 4 Jun 1937
- 65 Imp Conf 1937, E40. Summary of Proceedings, pp.14-15, G40:8
- 66 Imp Conf 1937, Foreign Policy, 3rd-4th meetings, 8-9 Jun 1937, EA1:152/1/1(2); Tamchina, pp.84-85; Ovendale, pp.46-47
- 67 NZPD, 29 Sep 1937, Vol.248, p.473; see notes for Savage's speech on his return to New Zealand, EA1:153/18/4(1)
- 68 NZPD, 29 Sep 1937, Vol.248, p.475
- 69 Ibid, p.476
- 70 Ibid, pp.490-491. See Note by MacDonald on NZ Delegation's Views Regarding Foreign Affairs, 28 May 1937, quoted in Roskill.III, p.276
- 71 Jordan to Savage, 25 Oct 1937; Jordan to PMD, 6,14 Sep 1937; LN. Report of Cmte of Ten Jurists, 21 Oct 1937, EA2:114/1/11(2)
- 72 Campbell to Berendsen, 15 Dec 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12)
- 73 Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep 1937, PM16:1; Jordan to Savage, 23 Sep 1937, EA1:264/2/7(12); see Day to Berendsen, 3 Nov 1937, EA1:63/2/15(1)
- 74 Report on 18th Assembly, p.28, EA2:114/3/2(7)
- 75 Report on 100th Council, p.12, EA2:114/4/2(1)
- 76 Dominion, 15 Oct 1937, National Party Papers 1096:Box 38
- 77 LN. Report of Special Cmte set up to Study the Application of the Principles of the Covenant, 22 Feb 1938, p.35, EA2:114/1/11(2)
- 78 Jordan to Savage, 9 Feb 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)

- 79 SSDA to GGNZ, 30 Jul 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3). Cf. Canada's 1923 resolution on Article 10. Veatch, Chapter 6
- 80 Savage to Jordan, 4 Aug 1938; Jordan to PMD, 5 Aug 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 81 GGNZ to SSDA, 11 Aug 1938; see Savage to Jordan, 11 Aug 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 82 SSDA to GGNZ, 23 Aug 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 83 GGNZ to SSDA, 10 Sep 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3). Cf. other Dominions. Cab. submission by Hughes, 17 Aug 1938; Lyons to Bruce, 19 Aug 1938, DAFP. I, pp.401-408,409-410; SSDA to GGNZ, 23 Aug 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 84 Savage to Jordan, 10 Sep 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 85 Scott, p.394; see Jordan to Savage, 19 Aug 1938, PM16:1
- 86 Jordan to Savage, 2 Sep 1938, PM16:1
- 87 Jordan to Savage, 13 Sep 1938; also Report on 19th Assembly, p.3, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 88 LNOJ. SS183. 19th Assembly. 1st Plenary meeting, 12 Sep 1938, pp.29-31
- 89 Evening Post, 13 Sep 1938, National Party Papers 1096:Box 24; Day to Berendsen, 13 Sep 1938, EA1:63/2/15(1)
- 90 In Jordan's absence, New Zealand was represented at these meetings by Frank T. Sandford from the High Commissioner's Office.
- 91 Jordan to PMD, 13 Sep 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 92 Savage to Jordan, 14 Sep 1938, EA2:114/1/11(3)
- 93 Report on 19th Assembly, pp.9-11,76-77, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 94 LNOJ. SS189. 19th Assembly. 6th Cmte, 5th meeting, 23 Sep 1938, p.30; Report on 19th Assembly, p.78, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 95 LNOJ. SS189. Annex 3
- 96 Ibid, 9th meeting, 28 Sep 1938, pp.58-60
- 97 Report on 19th Assembly, pp.79-80, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 98 LNOJ. SS183. 19th Assembly. 12th Plenary meeting, 30 Sep 1938, pp.97-100
- 99 Jordan to Savage, 18 Jan 1939; U-Sec-Gen to Jordan, 6 Jun 1939, EA2:114/1/11(3)

- 100 Berendsen to Day, 11 Oct 1938, EA1:63/2/15(1); Bennett, p.vi. See Doms 186. Czechoslovakia. Memoranda, Correspondence and Records of Meetings. March-October, 1938, G49:42
- 101 Jordan to Savage, nd(early Oct 1938), PM16:1
- 102 Berendsen to Savage, 14 Oct 1938, EA1:85/1/1(1)
- 103 SSDA to GGNZ, 24 Dec 1938, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 104 Berendsen to Savage, 17 Jan 1939, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 105 GGNZ to SSDA, 26 Jan 1939, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 106 G.E. Boyd Shannon(Official Sec. to British High Commissioner to NZ) to Berendsen, 8 Feb 1939, EA1:111/16/7(1); Cab. submission by Hughes, 23 Jan 1939, DAFP. II, pp.11-17
- 107 SSDA to GGNZ, 10 Feb 1939, EA1:111/16/7(1)
- 108 Berendsen to Savage, 11 Feb 1939; GGNZ to SSDA, 13 Feb 1939; Jordan to Sec-Gen, 13 Feb 1939; Jordan to Savage, 14 Feb 1939. In September 1939, the Commonwealth attached the same condition to the Optional Clause. SSDA to GGNZ, 3 Sep 1939; GGNZ to SSDA, 6 Sep 1939, EA1:111/16/7(1); Cab. submission by Sir H. Gullett(Min.Ext.Affairs, Aust), 7 Sep 1939; R. Menzies(PM, Aust) to SSDA, 8 Sep 1939, DAFP. II, pp.238-240,247-248
- 109 On the Albanian appeal see Barros. Betrayal..., p.197
- 110 Jordan to Savage, 27 Apr 1939, PM16:1; Day to PMD, 21 Apr 1939, EA1:350/5/1(1)
- 111 LNOJ. 105th Council, 1st meeting, 22 May 1939, pp.246-248
- 112 Savage to Jordan, 25 May 1939, EA2:114/2/2(2)
- 113 NZPD, 28 Jun 1939, Vol.254, pp.4-5
- 114 Jordan to Savage, 25 Jul 1939; Fraser to Jordan, 18 Aug 1939, EA2:114/2/2(2)
- 115 See Barros. Betrayal..., pp.198ff
- 116 PMNZ to Jordan, 8,11 Dec 1939, FA:344/2/1(1)
- 117 NZ Delegate's Report on 106th Council/20th Assembly, 22 Dec 1939, pp.9-19, EA2:114/4/2(3); Scott, p.398; Northedge, pp.273-274
- 118 Report on 19th Assembly, pp.1-2, EA2:114/3/2(8)
- 119 Savage to Menzies, 5 Nov 1939, DAFP. II, pp.369-371. Cf. NZLNU. Attwood, p.101

## CHAPTER 11

## NEW ZEALAND AND THE PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION

New Zealand was granted the mandate for Western Samoa under the Treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919. The Dominion also shared responsibility with Australia and Britain for the British Empire mandate over Nauru. Massey had been disappointed in his bid for the annexation of Western Samoa but he believed there was little difference between a mandate and absolute possession.<sup>1</sup> Yet he found on his return to New Zealand that few New Zealanders wanted the Dominion to assume responsibility for Western Samoa. The press and Opposition MPs questioned whether New Zealand had the expertise or financial resources to administer and develop a territory of 2,934 square kilometres with a population in 1919 of just under 31,500 people. Many felt it would have been preferable for Britain or the United States to accept the mandate.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, with the passage of the Treaties of Peace Act in October 1919, New Zealand formally accepted the mandate for Western Samoa.

Under Article 22 of the Covenant, the League mandates were divided into three groups, later known as 'A', 'B', and 'C' mandates, roughly in accordance with their level of political and economic development.<sup>3</sup> 'C' mandates, comprising South-West Africa and the former German islands in the Pacific, were regarded as being at such a low level of development that they could be administered as integral parts of the mandatory power's territory. There were some conditions placed on the manda-

tories, however. They were required to: safeguard the population against abuses like slavery, forced labour and the drugs and liquor traffic; guarantee freedom of conscience and religion; maintain the Open Door, and; prevent the establishment of military and naval bases, and the military training of the inhabitants for other than police purposes and the defence of the territory. The League Council was to exercise a supervisory role over the mandates system and every mandatory was required to submit an annual report. The Assembly did not have a direct role but was free to discuss any mandate-related questions.

In anticipation of the confirmation of the mandate by the League Council, which was in fact delayed for over a year by American and Japanese objections,<sup>4</sup> the New Zealand Government drew up legislation to replace the military government of Western Samoa with a civilian administration. The Solicitor-General, Sir John Salmond, argued that since the mandate had been conferred on "His Britannic Majesty to be exercised on his behalf by the New Zealand Government", such legislation would need to be sanctioned by an imperial Order-in-Council issued under the 1890 Foreign Jurisdiction Act.<sup>5</sup> South African Prime Minister General Smuts disagreed. He insisted that the mandates had been conferred on the Dominions in their own right and thus they could legislate for them without reference to a British Act of Parliament. To avoid adding fuel to the separatist debate in South Africa, the British Government concurred with Smuts' view.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the New Zealand Government still thought it wise to obtain an imperial Order-in-Council before enacting legislation for Western Samoa.<sup>7</sup>

The government displayed a curious ambivalence to the Dominion's status as a mandatory power. Massey certainly agreed with Smuts that the Dominions were separate mandatory powers from Britain. Thus, New Zealand's mandate report was sent direct to Geneva, in contrast to other correspondence with the League which went through the Colonial Office.<sup>8</sup> Yet the government thought it necessary to have the protection of an imperial Act when legislating for Western Samoa. Massey and Bell also claimed that New Zealand had acquired sovereignty over Western Samoa because the Dominion had received the territory from the Allied Powers, not the League.<sup>9</sup> Despite this assertion, the government preferred to administer Western Samoa by Order-in-Council until the League Council confirmed the mandate on 17 December 1920, just in case its terms conflicted with proposed legislation for the territory.<sup>10</sup> These actions reveal that New Zealand did not share South Africa's confidence that the Dominions possessed full sovereignty over their mandates.<sup>11</sup>

The Department of External Affairs was created in December 1919 to handle Samoan affairs. The department consisted of the Secretary of External Affairs, James Dunbar Gray, and five other staff who were shared with the Cook Islands Department. Gray was born in Auckland in 1872 and became assistant private secretary to the Premier in 1894. In 1916 he was appointed Secretary of the National Recruiting Board and he became a member of the Repatriation Board in 1919. Secretary of External Affairs from 1919 until 1928, Gray also headed the Cook Islands Department from 1922.<sup>12</sup>

The first Administrator(or Governor) of Western Samoa was Colonel

Robert W. Tate, who was appointed for a three-year term in 1920. The Administrator was empowered to make ordinances with the advice and consent of a Legislative Council consisting of six official members, appointed by the Governor-General, and three non-official members. The latter were also appointed initially but from 1923 they were elected by the local European community. While the Legislative Council, directed by the Administrator, made the laws, the Fono of Faipule, a body of carefully selected leading chiefly title-holders appointed by the Administrator to represent the local districts, advised him on the making of the laws for the Samoans.

New Zealand's island territories were considered too small to warrant a colonial service. The Samoan public service consisted of officers seconded or appointed from the New Zealand public service. Appointed for periods of two to three years, these officials were given no training in Samoan customs and they were not expected to learn the language. In 1921, a staff of 116, excluding Samoans, were operating some fifteen administrative departments. The work of these departments was unco-ordinated until a central office under the Secretary to the Administration, the principal officer of the public service, was provided for in an amending act in 1923. The junior positions in the Administration were filled by Samoans.

This was virtually the British crown colony system of government except that the Administrator was, theoretically at least, more subject to ministerial control than a British governor.<sup>13</sup> In reality, External Affairs did not supervise the Samoan Administration very closely during

the early years of the mandate and the Administrator was given considerable autonomy.<sup>14</sup> According to Bell, Minister of External Affairs from 1923 to 1926: "The less the Minister interferes, and the more the Administrator rules, the better for Samoa and the performance of our Mandate."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Gray complained as early as November 1920 that his department frequently found it difficult to deal with Samoan affairs because of the lack of up-to-date information.<sup>16</sup>

Because of the delays in the Council's confirmation of the mandate, New Zealand's first report on Western Samoa was not examined by the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) until its second session in August 1922.<sup>17</sup> The PMC was a tool of the Council, its most important task being to advise the Council on all questions relating to the execution of the mandates. It did this by receiving, examining and questioning the accredited representatives of the mandatory powers about their annual reports on the administration of the territories. Initially, the PMC held one annual session but the growing workload forced it to hold two sessions a year from 1925.<sup>18</sup> The Mandates Section of the League Secretariat acted as the secretariat of the PMC. An adviser from the International Labour Organisation was attached to the Commission whenever labour matters were discussed.

The PMC originally comprised nine members but with the appointment of a Swiss member in 1924 and a German member in 1927, this number rose to eleven. A majority had to be nationals of non-mandatory powers. The four places occupied by nationals of mandatories were filled by members from Belgium, France, Japan and Britain. Nationals from Italy, Spain,



Portugal, The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland occupied the non-mandatory seats on the PMC at various times. The PMC was not unaffected by the political crises of the 1930s, however. Germany ceased to be represented in 1933, the Italian member resigned in 1937 and the Japanese member followed suit in 1938. It was customary for members to be replaced by someone of the same nationality. The one exception was the replacement of the Swedish member with a Norwegian national. Both these members were women.

The members of the PMC were selected by the Council for their personal eminence and not as representatives of the governments of their countries. Most had successful careers in politics, diplomacy or colonial administration behind them. Many served for considerable periods, ensuring a remarkable continuity of membership. The more prominent members were: Marquis Theodoli(Italy), Chairman 1921-1937; Pierre Orts(Belgium), 1921-1939; Sir Frederick(later Lord) Lugard(Britain), 1923-1936; Mr Van Rees(The Netherlands), Vice-Chairman 1921-1934; W.E. Rappard(Switzerland), 1924-1939; L. Palacios(Spain), 1924-1939; Mrs Bugge-Wicksell(Sweden), 1921-1928; Miss V. Dannevig(Norway), 1928-1939; and M. Merlin(France), 1926-1935.<sup>19</sup>

New Zealand was usually represented at the PMC sessions by the High Commissioner in London. It was not an easy task because Wellington did not think it necessary to keep him informed of events in Western Samoa. He was largely dependent on the mandate reports for information. As a former Minister of External Affairs, Sir James Allen was more fortunate than his successors because he maintained contact on an informal basis

with Gray and the Secretary to the Samoan Administration. Even so, in 1922 he had to ask for a copy of the mandate report because, by some oversight, Wellington had failed to send him one.<sup>20</sup> The inadequacies of the system became readily apparent later when New Zealand's administration came under intensive scrutiny by the PMC after the outbreak of serious unrest in Western Samoa in 1927.

In the early years of the mandate, New Zealand was reprimanded by the PMC for giving insufficient information in its reports and for sending as reports the annual accounts by the Samoan Administration addressed to the government.<sup>21</sup> The Dominion was one of several mandatories which tended to treat the PMC with some disdain. The criticisms of the members were regarded as trifling and their interest in New Zealand's administration of Western Samoa was viewed almost as unacceptable interference by officials in Wellington and Apia. Typical of this attitude was the comment of General George S. Richardson, Administrator from 1923 to 1928, on his 1926 report: "I have written it simply because I know it is required to be understood by the old ladies at Geneva."<sup>22</sup> Though the Administrators' reports were sent to Geneva substantially unaltered by External Affairs, there were consistent efforts to remove niggling doubts on various subjects which may have left a more optimistic picture of Western Samoa than even the Administrators themselves wished to convey.<sup>23</sup>

Because of the novelty of the mandates system, the 1920s were a period of tension between the mandatories and the PMC as they attempted to define the relationship between them. The mandatory powers had a

rather narrow view of the PMC's role and they were sensitive to any indications that the members were trying to expand that role. New Zealand first complained that the PMC was exceeding its authority in 1922. This complaint was prompted by the PMC's report to the Council which suggested that the exploitation of Nauru's resources by the mandatory was not strictly in conformity with the terms of the mandate. While the examination of the mandatories' reports was conducted in private, a public meeting was held at the conclusion of the session where the PMC's report to the Council was discussed in the presence of the mandatories' representatives. Allen found it unacceptable that the PMC's report should be made public before it was put before the Council. He was especially concerned that the mandatories had no opportunity to consider the PMC's observations before being presented with them at the public meeting. He urged the New Zealand Government to make representations to the League to have the procedure changed.<sup>24</sup>

The PMC's report was sent to the Assembly for discussion after the Council had examined it. Thus the Assembly in September 1922 provided an ideal opportunity for New Zealand to express its objections. In his address on 19 September 1922, Bell said that New Zealand had nothing to fear from any investigation and it was willing to receive suggestions and advice from either the PMC or the Council. But the Dominion could not admit that the PMC had the power to interpret the meaning of the Covenant for New Zealand or to dictate how it must administer its mandate. He conceded the PMC must present a full and frank report to the Council, but he believed it was unnecessarily offensive to the mandatory for this report to be made public. He requested that this procedure be

discontinued.<sup>25</sup>

Bell found little support for his complaint. The Director of the Mandates Section, William E. Rappard, said it was only fair that the members of the League should have access to all the information concerning the mandates, since it was on their behalf that the mandatories were administering the territories.<sup>26</sup> The general view at the League seems to have been that New Zealand was overstating the problem. Nevertheless, Massey was confident that after Bell's speech there would be no more trouble from the PMC.<sup>27</sup>

Jealous of their authority over the mandates, the mandatory powers opposed anything which smacked of closer involvement by the PMC in the administration of the territories. In June 1926 the PMC decided to ask the Council for the right to hear petitioners from the mandated territories in exceptional cases. The existing procedure was that the inhabitants of the mandates could only petition the PMC through the mandatory. The PMC believed that if the grievance against the mandatory power was particularly serious, the members should be able to hear the petitioner's arguments directly.<sup>28</sup> The PMC also proposed a more detailed questionnaire for the mandatories, to overcome the problem of insufficient information in the mandate reports.<sup>29</sup>

Not surprisingly, the representatives of the mandatories opposed these proposals before the Council. It was usual for them to be present when the Council discussed the PMC's report. All the mandatories believed that the hearing of petitioners would undermine their authority

in the mandates and would be exploited by extremists for propaganda purposes. As for the questionnaire, the general view was that the PMC was requiring information on matters which were not properly its concern. Bell said that New Zealand was becoming impatient with the minute investigation of administrative details by the PMC.<sup>30</sup> Faced with this unanimous disapproval, the Council felt obliged to send the proposals to the mandatory governments for comment before making a decision.<sup>31</sup> The British Empire mandatories preferred not to reply until the matter could be discussed at the Imperial Conference in October 1926.<sup>32</sup>

The PMC came in for strong criticism at the conference for what Coates described as its tendency "to assume direction of the Governments, in lieu of criticism of their reports." The Empire mandatories feared that the PMC wanted a direct role in the government of the mandates. Coates urged them to take a united stand against the hearing of petitioners and the "long series of interrogatories" the PMC wished to introduce.<sup>33</sup> The British Government's draft reply to the League was fully endorsed by New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.<sup>34</sup>

On their behalf, the British rejected the PMC's request for information on every detail of the administration of the mandates. While each Empire mandatory was prepared to provide all the information that was "material to the discharge of its responsible duties", they found the "extreme minutiae" of the proposed questionnaire unacceptable. The proposal for the hearing of petitions was considered to be an "incorrect and dangerous" application of the theory that petitioners should have the means for making their grievances known. The British Government

felt that the existing procedure was adequate and the PMC was free to request further information. Since the PMC could ask the Council to take action if a mandatory proved unco-operative, the British were confident that the PMC would receive the fullest information. Both proposals went further than existing practices within the British colonial empire.

The British reply was sent to Geneva on 8 November 1926. New Zealand's letter stating its concurrence with the British views followed a fortnight later.<sup>35</sup> The replies from the other mandatories, except that of Belgium, were on similar lines.<sup>36</sup> Bell told the New Zealand Legislative Council in July 1927 that while he personally did not object to the PMC's right to hear petitioners, he was utterly opposed to the new questionnaire. He accused the PMC of being too zealous and of failing to appreciate that it was the mandatories' duty to govern the mandates. Allen suggested that Bell had over-dramatised the importance of the questionnaire, however.<sup>37</sup> Several New Zealand newspapers supported the government's stand. The Evening Post charged the PMC with "irresponsible zeal".<sup>38</sup> The Press considered many of the PMC's questions to be trivial or inquisitorial.<sup>39</sup> The LNU thought otherwise. At its conference in June 1927, the Dominion President, Dr A.G.B. Fisher, was dismayed that the government seemed to regard the work of the PMC and the obligations placed on New Zealand as an inconvenience. A remit was passed criticising the government's attitude and fully supporting the PMC on the questionnaire.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps because of the strenuous objections of the mandatories, the

PMC did not insist on a formal resolution of either question.<sup>41</sup> It reserved the right to hear petitioners but this right was never exercised.<sup>42</sup> It was not prepared to disregard the questionnaire entirely but the mandatories were told that it should be regarded as a guide only.<sup>43</sup>

The possibility of a German member on the PMC was another matter which greatly disturbed the New Zealand Government at this time. Germany was admitted to the League at the Assembly in September 1926. Bell was unenthusiastic because it raised questions about the former German colonies now under mandate.<sup>44</sup> The German Government was under pressure at home to seek the return of the colonies or at least have some of the mandates transferred to Germany.<sup>45</sup> The German demand for representation on the PMC was judged in the light of these claims. The Empire mandatories thought a German member would be disruptive. At the 1926 Imperial Conference, they agreed that another seat on the PMC should not be created for Germany. It was felt that Germany should first prove itself as a member of the League before consideration was given to its claim in regard to the PMC.<sup>46</sup>

New Zealand was dismayed when it was told in May 1927 that Germany intended to press its claim for representation at the Council meeting the following month. The British Government deprecated the move but thought it was not an issue of sufficient importance to risk alienating Germany.<sup>47</sup> South Africa agreed but New Zealand and Australia opposed the German claim.<sup>48</sup> In the event, Britain argued against the application in the Council but without success.<sup>49</sup> Dr Ludwig Kastl was appointed to the PMC in September 1927. In spite of New Zealand's fears, his

conduct proved entirely uncontroversial.

The mandatories were anxious to prevent the PMC from extending its authority but the PMC was equally active in countering any tendency by the mandatories to ignore or abuse the "sacred trust" which the League had conferred on them. It was particularly concerned to refute claims that the mandated territories were colonies in all but name. The PMC also tried to ensure that the mandatories did not contravene the terms of the mandates or exploit the territories as if they were colonies.

During New Zealand's first seven years as a mandatory, there were a number of areas over which the PMC expressed concern. The first pertained not to Western Samoa but to Nauru. Echoing doubts which had already been raised in the British House of Commons, the PMC questioned in 1922 whether the reservation of the ownership and exclusive exploitation of the territory's sole resource by Britain, Australia and New Zealand, under the 1919 Nauru Agreement,<sup>50</sup> was in keeping with "the disinterested spirit which should characterize the mission of a mandatory state." Not only was the phosphate monopoly which the three governments had established in 1920 at odds with the principle of the Open Door, but the PMC feared that the interests of Nauruans might be subordinated to phosphate exploitation.<sup>51</sup> Allen and the Australian representative, Sir Joseph Cook, strongly denied that the administration of the territory was not in accordance with the terms of the mandate. Cook assured the PMC that the Administrator, who was appointed by Australia, governed the island, not the Phosphate Commission.<sup>52</sup> The inclusion of what it considered to be an inaccurate assessment of the situation in Nauru in the



PMC's report,<sup>53</sup> angered the New Zealand Government and was responsible for Bell's outburst at the Third Assembly.<sup>54</sup> The PMC subsequently accepted that the three governments had acquired control of the phosphate company legitimately and thereafter Nauru ceased to be an issue.<sup>55</sup>

New Zealand's administration of Western Samoa did not escape the occasional criticism from the PMC. In 1922 it raised the question of Chinese indentured labour. New Zealand had continued the German practice of indenturing Chinese labourers to work on the private and government-owned plantations.<sup>56</sup> The system provoked much criticism in New Zealand because it was regarded as little more than slavery.<sup>57</sup> The PMC was concerned about the social impact of the presence of hundreds of aliens in Western Samoa, and by the reports of unfair treatment of the Chinese labourers.<sup>58</sup> Allen also had to defend the system at the Assembly a month later.<sup>59</sup> As a result of the criticism, the Samoan Administration introduced the Chinese Free Labour Ordinance in 1923 which abolished indenture and introduced contracts that increased wages and eliminated the penal clauses for labour offences.<sup>60</sup>

A related question was that of forced labour. The Samoan Administration required local District Councils to maintain tracks, roads and sanitation in their areas, and to control the destructive rhinoceros beetle in their coconut groves. The Samoans were not paid for this work and they were fined if it was not carried out. Under Article 3 of the mandate,<sup>61</sup> however, forced labour was prohibited except for essential public works and this labour had to be adequately remunerated. Concern that New Zealand might be contravening the mandate was first raised at

the October 1925 session. Gray told the PMC that New Zealand did not consider such labour to be forced labour but rather a continuation of a traditional Samoan obligation.<sup>62</sup>

The following year, Sir James Parr was questioned on the same subject. A couple of the members felt that these labour requirements did not strictly conform with the terms of the mandate, and a reference to compulsory labour was included in the PMC's observations on New Zealand's report.<sup>63</sup> Parr protested to the Council that the term 'compulsory labour' was inaccurate and open to misinterpretation.<sup>64</sup> In its reply to the PMC, the New Zealand Government insisted that the labour obligations were the ordinary requirements of all countries.<sup>65</sup> Coates told Parr that it would be disastrous for the welfare of Western Samoa if the Samoans refused to carry out community work unless they were paid.<sup>66</sup> New Zealand's repeated assurances that the labour requirements were merely a statutory recognition of a system which was in accord with Samoan custom, eventually satisfied the PMC.<sup>67</sup>

Despite these assurances, Berendsen, who replaced Gray as Secretary of External Affairs in 1928, admitted privately that the PMC's doubts had been well-founded. Commenting in October 1929 on an International Labour Organisation questionnaire on forced labour, he told the Secretary to the Samoan Administration, G.W. Clinkard, that the Samoan labour requirements were clearly in conflict with the mandate.<sup>68</sup> It was only with some difficulty that the Samoan Administration persuaded Berendsen that the disclosure of this fact, even if accompanied by an explanation of the special circumstances existing in Western Samoa, would not be in

New Zealand's best interests.<sup>69</sup> In the event, such civil obligations were excluded from the International Labour Organisation's 1930 Convention, but plainly the Samoan Administration did not want the matter subjected to renewed PMC scrutiny.<sup>70</sup>

The PMC also devoted much attention to the Crown Estates. These were plantations and other properties confiscated from private German owners during the war and claimed as reparations by the New Zealand Government.<sup>71</sup> Some were sold but the larger plantations were either leased or managed by the Samoan Administration on the government's behalf. From the early 1920s, the profits from the Estates were granted to the Administration to help balance the budget.<sup>72</sup> In 1924 and 1925, the PMC expressed disquiet that a substantial proportion of Samoan land - about 14% - was owned by the New Zealand Government.<sup>73</sup> It was suggested that this extensive land-holding could be regarded as veiled annexation. There was concern too that the Estates might enjoy preferential treatment which would disadvantage private landowners.<sup>74</sup> The implication was that New Zealand's supposedly disinterested administration was in danger of being compromised.

Though under considerable pressure from the PMC to liquidate these properties,<sup>75</sup> the government decided in 1925 against disposing of the Estates.<sup>76</sup> Bell told the League that despite what the PMC might believe, the Dominion had an absolute right to keep them.<sup>77</sup> In order not to give the PMC cause for comment in the future, the Administrator was instructed to make no mention of the Estates in his report.<sup>78</sup> In addition, the grants to the Administration were no longer made directly from

the Estates Account but were channeled through External Affairs.<sup>79</sup>

In 1923 the PMC had questioned for similar reasons the advancement of large loans by New Zealand to enable major public works to be built in Western Samoa. It wondered whether, in the event of the territory defaulting on the loans, the mandatory might not take control of these public works or even annex the territory. Allen was quick to dismiss the suggestion but he reiterated his government's belief that the mandate should be made largely to pay its own way.<sup>80</sup>

It was inevitable that New Zealand and the PMC would not always agree on the way Western Samoa should be governed but the problems outlined above did not prevent the development of good relations between them by the mid-1920s. In 1923 Allen expressed the belief that the PMC was looking to New Zealand to act as a model for other 'C' mandatories, and this view became prevalent among officials in Wellington and Apia.<sup>81</sup> Writing to Richardson in July 1924, Gray said that the PMC had put New Zealand on a "very high pinnacle as an example to the Great Powers of the world."<sup>82</sup> Bell sent Gray to Geneva the following year to familiarise himself with the PMC.<sup>83</sup> His presence at the October 1925 session was warmly welcomed by the members. Gray reported afterwards: "It is quite evident that they regard us as a mandatory power in a class apart. They have no doubts or suspicions whatever about us or our intentions."<sup>84</sup> Still, Gray realised that there were dangers in placing the Samoan Administration on such a "dizzy pinnacle of glory". He warned the Secretary to the Samoan Administration, Colonel James W. Hutchen, in December 1925: "This is the time therefore to be very watchful and

circumspect in case we slip. To fall from our present height would be somewhat painful."<sup>85</sup> When the fall from grace did come in 1927, it was indeed all the more bewildering because of the supreme confidence Wellington had in Richardson's administration.<sup>86</sup>

There had been dissatisfaction with New Zealand's rule in Western Samoa even before the end of the military occupation. The disastrous impact of the 1918 influenza epidemic, an economic slump, and the introduction of prohibition were behind the initial discontent. The continuation of a military-style government under the mandate, with a rigidly-centralised administration in which the local population had almost no say, alienated Europeans and Samoans alike. The paternalistic, even racist, attitudes of the Administrators and their officials accentuated the problem.<sup>87</sup> The lack of consultation on Richardson's ambitious plans to increase crop production, reform land tenure, and improve health, fuelled resentment. Perhaps Richardson's greatest mistake was the use of harsh sanctions, such as banishment and the deprivation of chiefly titles, against dissidents for this gravely offended the Samoans.<sup>88</sup>

In late 1926, meetings of Europeans and Samoans were held in Apia to create a coalition to voice their discontent with the Administration. Richardson saw the meetings and the resultant Citizens Committee as an attempt by the Europeans to undermine his authority by exploiting who he considered to be the simple and politically-naïve Samoans. He treated the Committee and its leading spokesman, Olaf F. Nelson, a wealthy merchant of mixed Samoan and European descent, with contempt and he refused to consider their submissions. Richardson's hostility and the

punishment of Samoans supporting the Committee strengthened Samoan opposition and led to the creation of a movement known as 'O le Mau'(a title implying 'Samoan public opinion').

In a broad sense, the Mau was a semi-modern nationalist movement, organised from above by an educated and chiefly elite, with roots going back to the nineteenth century. The mainspring was Nelson, whose closest supporters were the Committee of six influential European residents and six high-ranking Samoan matai(family heads and holders of the family title of chief or orator) who lived in close contact with the Europeans. Their ambition was for Western Samoa, like Tonga, to become self-governing under British protection and that they should replace New Zealand as the controlling authority. To win mass support in a still largely traditional society, they established an organisation consisting of loosely-knit village committees of matai grouped around a large working committee of sixty to seventy high-ranking titleholders who maintained close contact with Nelson.

Nelson was probably not far from the truth when he claimed that the Mau represented 90% of the people. Most of the Samoan titleholders who did not join the Mau were members of the Fono of Faipule or Samoan officials, who valued their official status and pay. Mary Boyd suggests that the struggle between the Samoan supporters of the Administration and the Mau was a struggle between the 'ins' and 'outs' of Samoan government. The existing system had resulted in the alienation of most of those Samoan titleholders whose prerogative it was to exercise political leadership on behalf of their families. Mau supporters in the

villages and districts sought to strengthen Samoan custom and the powers of the chiefs and orators. Above this level, they saw self-government in terms of the distribution of ceremonial power rather than the exercise of effective political authority and modern government.

The Mau's campaign against the Administration combined customary Samoan techniques of exercising political power from above and consultation at all levels of society to achieve a consensus, with Western protest techniques. The latter included: boycotts of all officially-sponsored activities, including education and health services; civil disobedience, such as refusing to pay taxes and fulfil labour obligations; demonstrations and petitions.<sup>89</sup> In March 1927, a petition was sent to the New Zealand Parliament with twenty-one complaints against the Administration.<sup>90</sup> This eventually resulted in the appointment of a Royal Commission in August 1927 to investigate New Zealand's administration of Western Samoa.<sup>91</sup>

Wellington had for months accepted Richardson's assurances that the unrest was not serious.<sup>92</sup> But by mid-May 1927, the government could no longer ignore the problem. The Minister of External Affairs, William Nosworthy, visited Western Samoa in June 1927 to assess the situation.<sup>93</sup> As a result, his department began to take a much greater interest in the Administration and Richardson was warned that he should seek approval from Wellington before taking any action.<sup>94</sup> This was because Western Samoa had become a contentious issue in the New Zealand press and in Parliament. The Labour Party was loudly critical of Richardson and opposed the government's move to grant him greater powers, including

that of deportation.<sup>95</sup> The government was less concerned by the criticism itself than by the possibility that it would compound the damage already done to the Dominion's image at Geneva. There was no question that as a result of the League Secretariat's monitoring of the international press, the PMC was aware of New Zealand's difficulties.<sup>96</sup>

The PMC had noted newspaper criticism of the Dominion's administration in November 1926 but Parr had dismissed it as unimportant.<sup>97</sup> By July 1927, however, Parr had become alarmed by the unfavourable reports on the Samoan situation appearing in the British press.<sup>98</sup> On his urging, Coates sent a statement to The Times to counter the harmful effect these reports would have in Britain and Geneva.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the New Zealand Government's sensitivity to adverse comment by the League influenced its handling of the Samoan unrest from the beginning. Coates told the Governor-General, Sir Charles Fergusson, that the government would take "no step that may be open to misconception or criticism by the League of Nations."<sup>100</sup> The forthcoming sessions of the Assembly and the PMC were viewed with some apprehension.<sup>101</sup>

The New Zealand delegates to the 1927 Assembly had little difficulty in satisfying the Sixth Committee.<sup>102</sup> But the PMC's session in November 1927 was much more of a trial. As Parr feared, many of the members' questions were based on newspaper reports. The first related to a speech made by Richardson during celebrations of the King's birthday in June 1927, in which he implied that all Samoans were British subjects and that Western Samoa was part of the British Empire. The second referred to a report that Coates had ridiculed the PMC's new question-



naire in Parliament.<sup>103</sup> In both cases Parr tried to play down the importance of the incident.<sup>104</sup> He later told Coates that these questions proved how well-informed the PMC was and how sensitive it was to any challenge to the League's authority over the mandates. Above all, noted Parr, the PMC's enquiries showed the need for circumspection by ministers and officials in New Zealand and Western Samoa.

The PMC then went on to interrogate Parr on the Samoan unrest.<sup>105</sup> The members were particularly unhappy that they had not been informed of the history of difficulties encountered by the Samoan Administration since 1921.<sup>106</sup> The suggestion was that New Zealand had presented, perhaps deliberately, an inaccurate picture by failing to mention any signs of disaffection in Western Samoa.<sup>107</sup> Parr explained that those incidents had not been considered important at the time<sup>108</sup> but he told Coates later that it would have been better to have acknowledged these past troubles. "I do not suggest that there has been a deliberate attempt to conceal untoward incidents or expressions of dissatisfaction towards the Administration, but I do say that the Government has nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking the Commission fully into its confidence."

Parr felt very much at a disadvantage when faced with the PMC's close questioning. He complained that he had to "stand fire" for two days without the detailed knowledge necessary to satisfactorily answer the members "innumerable" questions. Coates was urged to follow the example of other mandatories and send a "man from the spot" to the PMC sessions.<sup>109</sup> Parr was able, nonetheless, to persuade the PMC to reserve

judgement until it had seen the report of the Royal Commission.<sup>110</sup>

Completed at the end of November 1927, the Royal Commission's report totally vindicated Richardson and concurred with his contention that the Mau was inspired by local European agitators.<sup>111</sup> As a result, Coates readily agreed to Richardson's proposal to deport Nelson and two other European members of the Citizens Committee to New Zealand.<sup>112</sup> Far from quelling the Mau, this action only led to further demonstrations and passive resistance. In February 1928, Richardson requested military reinforcements from New Zealand. Two warships were sent to Western Samoa but the attempt to restore control by military means was a failure.<sup>113</sup> As the situation continued to deteriorate, the government rapidly lost confidence in Richardson.<sup>114</sup>

Consideration was being given to replacing Richardson as early as December 1927.<sup>115</sup> Increasingly he was seen as the major obstacle to a settlement and in March 1928 Coates forced his retirement.<sup>116</sup> The official explanation was that he had retired early to represent New Zealand before the PMC when it examined the Royal Commission report in June 1928.<sup>117</sup> Less than two months later Gray retired and was replaced by Berendsen. At the same time Coates took over the External Affairs portfolio.<sup>118</sup> It seems clear that these changes were an effort by Coates to exercise more direct control over a situation which had become a severe embarrassment to New Zealand.<sup>119</sup>

Richardson's appointment to Geneva was not simply a face-saving exercise. It was probably no coincidence that the government chose this

occasion to fulfil the PMC's repeated request for the mandatory powers to send the Administrators of their territories as delegates to its sessions.<sup>120</sup> Confident that the PMC's comments would be favourable, Coates advised the new Administrator, Colonel Stephen S. Allen, not to take any action against the Mau until the results of the session could be publicised in Western Samoa.<sup>121</sup> The government hoped the PMC would make a public pronouncement approving New Zealand's administration in order that the Mau would have no cause to believe that the League would intervene on their behalf.<sup>122</sup> This consideration became even more important when Parr reported that Nelson was in Geneva trying to obtain an audience with the PMC.<sup>123</sup>

Though apparently held in high regard by the members of the PMC, Richardson did not escape criticism.<sup>124</sup> Far from accepting the Mau's charges that the Administration had been too harsh, the PMC believed that Richardson had not dealt with the situation firmly enough. It was suggested that he had been excessively patient and that his inactivity before June 1927 had destroyed Samoan confidence in the Administration. The New Zealand Government was also blamed for not giving Richardson the legal powers and an adequate police force to deal with the agitators in the early stages. The view of the majority of the members was that the first duty of a mandatory power was to maintain order and to prevent an illegal assumption of authority by anybody. They also made it clear that deference to the League should not hamper the performance of this duty.<sup>125</sup>

The PMC accepted the Royal Commission's findings, particularly that

Nelson was behind the agitation for his own financial and political ends. It was not prepared, therefore, to accept the charges contained in petitions from the Citizens Committee, the Mau and other groups, which were being sent to Geneva.<sup>126</sup> The rising number of petitions alarmed the Samoan Administration. In November 1927, a catechism was distributed, on an informal basis and without the New Zealand Government's knowledge, to schools outlining Western Samoa's constitutional relationship with New Zealand and the League.<sup>127</sup> It implied that the League had only limited interest in Western Samoa and that petitions could not be sent to the PMC. The catechism became itself the subject of a petition from the London-based Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in June 1928.<sup>128</sup> As Parr expected, the PMC reproved Richardson for allowing such a document to be circulated.<sup>129</sup>

Despite this criticism, Richardson believed that his presence at the session had had a useful effect.<sup>130</sup> This view was supported by J.V. Wilson, who said that Richardson's "masterly" performance had made the PMC much more sympathetic towards New Zealand. He noted that although Nelson had had unofficial contacts with PMC members, they had not furthered his cause.<sup>131</sup> Nonetheless, because of the PMC's reservations about the Dominion's handling of the unrest, its report to the Council was not the wholehearted endorsement the government had hoped for. Still, the PMC had accepted that there were no genuine grievances behind the agitation and it was prepared to support New Zealand's efforts to re-establish peace. Most importantly, both the PMC and the Council stated that the League would not interfere in the administration of the territory.<sup>132</sup> Berendsen thought the report would be useful in counter-

ing Mau propaganda.<sup>133</sup>

When the PMC examined New Zealand's report in October 1928, it expressed disappointment that the disaffection was still serious. The members were critical of the government's continued toleration of the unrest and they wondered whether the policy of patience was the result of Labour Party pressure. Parr replied sharply that the only alternative to patience was active repression. He was not greatly impressed with the PMC's advocacy of firmer action because he knew it would be New Zealand which would have to accept responsibility for the consequences of that action, not the PMC.<sup>134</sup>

Because Colonel Allen and the government agreed that patience was the best policy, the Administration encountered little interference from Wellington. But in November 1928 the Public Service Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary to the Treasury and the Secretary of External Affairs were sent to Western Samoa by Coates to report on ways to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of the Administration. The report by Paul Verschaffelt, Alexander Park and Berendsen (known as the VPB report) was a damning indictment of the Administration's staff and finances. It concluded that the Samoan Public Service was overstaffed and that most of the officers were either incompetent or inefficient. Because of extravagance or waste, noted the report, expenditure had exceeded revenue for several years. It recommended reductions in staff and salaries, and cutting back medical and education services to reduce drastically the subsidies required from New Zealand.<sup>135</sup>

The report's findings seemed to confirm the original complaints of the Citizens Committee. They also raised doubts about the veracity of the Royal Commission's report. Though it had not examined staffing and finances in detail, the Royal Commission had effectively dismissed all complaints against the Administration. The new United Government realised it could expect criticism not only from opponents within New Zealand but from Geneva as well.<sup>136</sup> Writing to Parr in February 1929, Sir Joseph Ward acknowledged that there would be some difficulty in explaining the circumstances of the VPB report to the PMC. He instructed Parr to state that the report was non-political in interest and thus did not directly conflict with the Royal Commission's report. The PMC was also to be told that while there may have been overspending, it was money which had been contributed by New Zealand taxpayers, not Samoans.<sup>137</sup> The extension of Parr's term as High Commissioner until the end of the year was, in part, so that he could explain the VPB report and the government's Samoan policy to the PMC.<sup>138</sup>

In March 1929 the government came under pressure to take a more active stand against the Mau. Colonel Allen felt that the policy of patience had failed.<sup>139</sup> The Governor-General also urged Ward to change tack. Noting that the PMC had called on New Zealand to carry out its responsibilities for enforcing law and order in Western Samoa, Fergusson said: "Personally, I would feel that that expression of opinion by men who are one and all experts in dealing with native races was imperative, and ample justification in the eyes of public opinion for standing no more nonsense in Samoa."<sup>140</sup> Ward was not convinced.<sup>141</sup> In a lengthy memorandum to Parr in July 1929, he said that because the Mau had

generally eschewed violence, not even the paramount necessity of upholding the prestige of the Administration could justify the adoption of forcible measures.

The government continued to believe that time and patience, combined with firmness where essential, was the best course. With the PMC's previously-expressed reservations on this policy in mind, Ward declared that it was in the best interests of the Samoans and was neither the result of ignorance nor timidity. He emphasised that domestic political considerations had no bearing on the government's policy. In line with the VPB report, the government decided it was no longer acceptable for New Zealand to be subsidising Western Samoa to the tune of £40,000 per annum, especially in view of "the ingratitude and indeed hostility of the majority of the people on whose behalf the money is being spent." Thus, with the ultimate objective of making Western Samoa self-supporting, there would be retrenchment but Parr was to assure the PMC that New Zealand would continue to fulfil its obligations under the mandate.<sup>142</sup>

When the PMC met in November 1929, the members were in no mood to accept such assurances. The goodwill they had displayed towards New Zealand only a year before had largely dissipated and Parr was given a "most difficult time". The members were critical that despite the obvious lack of any marked improvement in the situation, the mandate report made only vague references to conditions in the territory.<sup>143</sup> Berendsen had found the Administrator's draft report "unduly pessimistic" and had it changed.<sup>144</sup> This attempt to present the Administration in a better light had backfired.

The continued paralysis of the Administration by the Mau was a matter of great concern to the PMC. Parr was told that New Zealand must reassert its control. Annoyed by the suggestion that the Administration was weak, Parr asked whether the PMC was advocating force to coerce the Samoans. The members hurridly replied that it was not their intention to interfere in New Zealand's administration and they were not advocating the use of force.<sup>145</sup>

Parr was far less successful in explaining why the mandate report's optimism was so completely at odds with the tenor of the VPB report. The PMC felt betrayed by New Zealand. The Royal Commission's report and Richardson's assurances of the previous year were now regarded with suspicion and doubt. The members had difficulty in accepting the Administration's inadequacies were not at least partly to blame for the current unrest,<sup>146</sup> especially after Sir Apirana Ngata, the Minister of Native Affairs, had said in Parliament that Richardson had not pursued sufficiently enlightened policies.<sup>147</sup> Still, the PMC was prepared to reserve judgement until the reorganisation of the Administration was completed. As for the plan to institute economies in the territory, the members did not strongly object but they pointed out that few mandates did without grants from the mandatory power.<sup>148</sup>

In its report to the Council, the PMC concluded that contrary to previous reports there were severe deficiencies in New Zealand's administration of Western Samoa. It acknowledged that the Dominion was attempting to remedy this situation but expressed concern about the proposed retrenchment, particularly if it resulted in an increase in the



territory's debts. The strongest reproof was directed at what the PMC believed to be the lack of candour in the Dominion's previous mandate reports. Describing the VPB report as a "painful surprise", the PMC requested that New Zealand provide the information which would enable the members to form a true picture of the situation in Western Samoa.<sup>149</sup> The PMC's confidence in the Dominion had been badly shaken and the diplomatic language could not disguise the clear warning to the government that New Zealand's conduct as a mandatory would face critical scrutiny in the future.

Not surprisingly, the government did not totally accept the PMC's criticisms. Parr told the Mandates Section that since the Administrator was responsible for drawing up the mandate reports, the government could not be blamed for any errors.<sup>150</sup> But in July 1930 Thomas Wilford advised Forbes not to dismiss lightly the petitions addressed to the League from Samoans and concerned New Zealanders. In view of the PMC's attitude the previous November, he said it was probable that these petitions would receive more attention than before. The government should answer them in some detail.<sup>151</sup>

External Affairs took heed of the PMC's comments on the mandate reports. Berendsen told the Samoan Administration in March 1930 that its report should be as full as possible on the Mau and the implementation of the VPB recommendations.<sup>152</sup> The draft report received in May 1930 was far from satisfactory. Colonel Allen was requested to include more information on administrative changes and to tone down the optimism about conditions in Western Samoa. He was also asked to prepare a

detailed brief to assist Wilford before the PMC.<sup>153</sup> Allen was prepared to fulfil most of these requests but, because the publication of the VPB report against his wishes still rankled, he refused to include any comment on its effects in his report.<sup>154</sup> Forbes explained that the government was only trying to avoid any "loophole for criticism" by the PMC but Berendsen was finally forced to add a separate memorandum to the report to cover Allen's omissions.<sup>155</sup>

The government feared more criticism from the PMC after the incident known as 'Black Saturday' in Apia on 28 December 1929, in which one policeman and eight Samoans, including Mau leader Tupua Tamasese, lost their lives, and the subsequent military operation against the Mau.<sup>156</sup> At the session in November 1930, Wilford, advised on this occasion by Berendsen, told the PMC that despite these troubles the situation in the territory had improved significantly following the Defence Minister's talks with the Mau in March 1930.<sup>157</sup> The PMC confined itself to an expression of hope that the government's policy would result in closer co-operation between the Administration and the Samoans.<sup>158</sup>

It was a vain hope because the New Zealand Government had no intention of trying to reach a mutually-acceptable settlement with the Mau. The outward calm in Western Samoa over the next few years, which the government trumpeted in its reports as evidence of the success of the Dominion's 'quiet policy', was deceptive. Open opposition to the Administration had largely ceased but the causes of the unrest, and the dissatisfaction they engendered, remained.<sup>159</sup> The new Administrator, Brigadier-General Herbert E. Hart, who replaced Allen in April 1931,

certainly believed that the situation would continue to be difficult.<sup>160</sup>

The fact that the PMC remained uneasy about Western Samoa, despite repeated declarations by the government that the unrest had ceased, was symptomatic of how much its confidence in New Zealand had been undermined by the events of the late 1920s.<sup>161</sup> For their part, officials in Wellington and Apia were anxious to restore that confidence by ensuring the mandate reports were as informative as possible<sup>162</sup> and by briefing the High Commissioner before each session.<sup>163</sup> The New Zealand representatives were instructed to temper optimism with caution because, as Berendsen explained, nothing could be worse than telling the PMC definitely that all was well and subsequently finding it necessary "to eat our words".<sup>164</sup> Expediency dictated New Zealand's deferential attitude towards the PMC but the necessity for this attitude caused growing resentment.

External Affairs and the Samoan Administration became increasingly irritated by what they considered to be a lack of objectivity and perspective on the part of the PMC. In July 1932, Berendsen told Knowles:

I really am not surprised that the gentlemen at Geneva, who I have no doubt have really genuine grievances in other Mandated Territories to deliberate upon, should find some difficulty in attaining a due sense of perspective in looking upon the Samoan situation. I must say, however, that I find their continued tone of criticism, largely based on trifles, rather irritating, and I am sure the only effect of the published Minutes is to encourage those who wish to perpetuate trouble...<sup>165</sup>

Colonel Allen was concerned that in order to answer the PMC's questions, the New Zealand representative might be forced to reveal the Administrator's private views, no matter how unflattering, on certain individuals

or groups in Western Samoa. Writing to Forbes in March 1931, he said that making these views public would only provoke further unrest. "This is one of the unfortunate difficulties of the Mandate system," declared Allen, "that we have to live in such a public atmosphere, and draw attention to other people's shortcomings for the benefit of the Commission when it might be wiser to say nothing."<sup>166</sup>

The frustration was all the greater because the PMC seemed unable to appreciate the special complexities and difficulties New Zealand believed it faced in Western Samoa.<sup>167</sup> Wilford told Forbes in November 1932: "I do not think the Commission is, even now, familiar with conditions due to the peculiar mentality of the Samoans, but it is not to be expected that they should be: only serious contact with the natives could clear their minds."<sup>168</sup> Since the PMC could not visit the mandates, this requisite was clearly out of the question.<sup>169</sup> The Samoan Administration believed that part of the problem was that the Dominion was mostly represented at Geneva by men unfamiliar with Western Samoa.<sup>170</sup> Berendsen acknowledged that representation by the High Commissioner was "totally inadequate" and that "the silliest things are said and false impressions created", but he could not offer a solution. He thought the PMC's readiness to accept information from unofficial sources was of greater concern.<sup>171</sup>

Because of the government's acute sensitivity to criticism,<sup>172</sup> relations between New Zealand and the PMC remained strained during the early 1930s.<sup>173</sup> The government was especially disturbed when any of the criticisms were picked up by the New Zealand press. The publicity given

to Lord Lugard's suggestion in 1934 that the short tenure of Samoan officials was not conducive to good administration, is a case in point.<sup>174</sup> Writing to the Secretary to the Samoan Administration, Alfred C. Turnbull, in May 1935, Berendsen fumed: "I feel myself that it is time we took a more definite line with these people. It is not as if their criticism was either constructive or valuable. I think they are just looking for things to criticise and I think also that the net effect is definitely bad."<sup>175</sup>

Forbes and Berendsen made no secret of their dissatisfaction with the PMC when Wilson visited New Zealand between November 1934 and February 1935. Reporting to the Secretary-General, he said they had accused the members of a lack of proportion in dealing with Western Samoa. Wilson had defended the PMC's rights to request any information it thought fit and he suggested to them that the government was itself in danger of losing its sense of proportion in regard to the PMC's comments. "What is certain," he told Avenol, "is that the responsibility for the mandate bulks very large in the general complex of New Zealand's external relations."<sup>176</sup>

The election of a Labour Government in New Zealand in December 1935 signalled a change in Wellington's attitude towards Western Samoa.<sup>177</sup> The Labour Party had long campaigned against the policies of previous governments and Savage and his colleagues were keen to restore the Dominion's image in the territory. In June 1936 the order declaring the Mau seditious was revoked and the balance of Nelson's second term of exile was remitted. A month later, the government sent a 'Goodwill

Mission', comprising Minister of Lands Frank Langstone and the MP for Westland, James O'Brien, to Western Samoa. On their recommendation, all anti-Mau legislation was repealed and all taxes were remitted. Changes were also suggested to increase Samoan participation in local government and to improve the education and medical services.<sup>178</sup>

New Zealand's volte-face astonished the PMC. When Berendsen attended the November 1936 session,<sup>179</sup> he found the members were worried about the effects of the new policy and suspicious of the government's motives. He was told that a prudent colonial administration would not make precipitate and ostentatious changes of such importance. The PMC believed that a more prudent procedure should have been adopted. The members had great difficulty in accepting that the Mau would now co-operate with the Administration after having been told for the last six years that it was a seditious organisation. It was suggested that party politics in New Zealand had been an important consideration behind the new policy. Some members suspected that Labour had made the changes not simply out of concern for the Samoans but to discredit the policy of the former government and thereby obtain political advantage in New Zealand.

Berendsen was taken aback by the PMC's reaction. He replied that the Labour Government's policy was entirely consistent with the PMC's repeated calls for a resumption of co-operation between the Samoans and the Administration. Nobody could assert that it was not a wise policy to obtain the full co-operation of all sections of the people as soon as it could safely be attempted. As far as the government's motives were concerned, Berendsen reminded the members that Labour had criticis-

ed the previous policy for a long time.<sup>180</sup>

Predictably, the PMC's comments were not well-received in Wellington. Indeed, the government was so annoyed that Nash launched a stinging attack on the PMC when its report came before the Council in January 1937. He could not understand why the PMC was criticising the government simply for fulfilling the terms of the mandate. All Labour was doing, he said, was attempting to release the people of Western Samoa as quickly as possible from the difficulties and injustices which they felt they had suffered for some time.<sup>181</sup> The implication was that on this occasion at least the government had a better appreciation of the responsibilities of a mandatory power than the PMC. Nonetheless, at a meeting with Lugard a fortnight later, Nash could not dissuade him from the notion that the government's actions had been unwise and precipitate.<sup>182</sup>

When the PMC examined New Zealand's next mandate report, the members conceded that there had been a marked improvement in the situation in Western Samoa.<sup>183</sup> But while Labour's policy certainly had a beneficial psychological effect, the changes initiated by Wellington were few. Preoccupied with domestic and international matters, the government devoted little attention to Western Samoa after 1936.<sup>184</sup> Yet, simply making the Administration less obtrusive and leaving the Samoans to run their local affairs was sufficient to encourage the peaceful conditions of the late 1930s. In October 1937, Turnbull, now the acting Administrator, wrote: "The present period compares more than favourably with any time in the past and there is not the slightest doubt the

Samoans are better off under New Zealand than they would be under any other control, including their own."<sup>185</sup> Despite this confidence, New Zealand's delegate to the PMC during these years, Dick Campbell, was careful not to paint too rosy a picture.<sup>186</sup> The examination of New Zealand's reports was generally uncontentious, however. There were criticisms but, as Berendsen acknowledged, they were neither particularly objectionable nor harmful.<sup>187</sup>

In 1938, for instance, Lugard's successor, Lord Hailey, suggested that New Zealand was not doing enough to train Samoans for self-government. He said that experience had shown the error of believing that political training could be given simply by appointing a large number of Samoan officials.<sup>188</sup> The PMC was certain that New Zealand would agree that self-government could best be achieved by gradually increasing the Samoans' responsibilities in government.<sup>189</sup> It considered that New Zealand should look at integrating the system of traditional Samoan authority with the general system of administration of the territory.<sup>190</sup> But Berendsen was averse to the legal recognition and promotion of undemocratic, traditional chiefly authority which this entailed. The New Zealand Government told the PMC that while it had considered the idea and had encouraged Samoan leaders to hold government offices, it believed that "to formulate native custom and social discrimination into law might retard healthy evolution towards more completely democratic principles."<sup>191</sup>

It is clear that until 1936, New Zealand's relationship with the League was dominated by the Samoan mandate. Gray claimed in 1926 that



75% of the League business handled by External Affairs concerned Western Samoa.<sup>192</sup>

Indeed, the Massey Government seems to have felt that the only justification for New Zealand's membership of the League was that the Dominion was a mandatory.<sup>193</sup> Yet New Zealand found the administration of the mandate a troublesome and thankless task. Many of the problems were of the Dominion's own making; the consequences of its inexperience as a colonial power and the rigidity of mind of those who governed the territory. But the difficulties inherent in the mandate system were also an important factor.

Because the League's authority over the mandates had not been fully defined, New Zealand could not claim with any confidence that it had unfettered control over Western Samoa. The annual report to the PMC was a constant reminder to the government that ultimate sovereignty did not reside in Wellington. Officials and ministers found this accountability to Geneva restrictive and believed it encouraged Samoan dissidents. Undoubtedly it was partly the necessity for justifying its actions to the PMC which led the government to respond to the Mau with a muddled policy of half-hearted repression alternating with equally lukewarm conciliation. Much more than successive governments would have cared to admit, the opinions of the League had a considerable influence on the way New Zealand governed its mandate.

## REFERENCES

- 1 British-Australasian, 29 May 1919, EA31:5; see NZPD, 2 Sep 1919, Vol.184, pp.46-48
- 2 GGNZ to SSCols, 4 Dec 1918, EA1:311/1/2(1A); NZPD, 2 Sep 1919, Vol. 184, pp.59,63-64,72; 30 Jul 1920, Vol.186, pp.888,903; 23 Sep 1920, Vol.187, pp.1206-1208; Lyttelton Times, 28 Jan 1919; The Times, 5 Apr 1919, IT1:25/1/2(1); Southland News, 20 Sep 1920, IT1:67/12/2(1); see files IT1:37/2 & 37/3; O'Farrell, pp.169ff; Boyd, M. The Record in Western Samoa to 1945. In Ross, A.(ed) New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1969, pp.124-125; Snelling, pp.19-20
- 3 On the mandates system see Hall, H.D. Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship. London: Stevens & Sons, 1948; Chowdhuri, R.N. International Mandates and Trusteeship Systems. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955
- 4 See file G48:S/8; R.W. Tate(Administrator) to J.D. Gray(Sec.Ext. Affairs), 1 Jan 1921, Robert W. Tate Papers 264:1; E.P. Lee(Min.Ext. Affairs) to Massey, 24 Jan 1921, IT1:25/1/2(1); LN. 2nd Assembly. 17th Plenary meeting, 23 Sep 1921, pp.351-352
- 5 Salmond to Allen, 15 Jan 1920. Cf. Bell to Salmond, 8 Feb 1920, IT1:25/1/2(1)
- 6 SSCols to GGNZ, 3 Feb 1920, IT1:25/1/2(1)
- 7 Salmond to Bell, 11 Feb 1920; GGNZ to SSCols, 13 Feb 1920, IT1:25/1/2(1). See file IT1:67/12/2(1); Boyd, M. A Footnote on New Zealand's Attitude to Dominion Status 1919-1921. Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies. 3.1, Mar 1965, pp.64-70
- 8 See 'Samoa and the League of Nations', memo by Bell, 11 Oct 1921, EA1:311/3/1(1A)
- 9 NZPD, 23 Sep 1920, Vol.187, pp.1203-1205; 30 Sep 1920, Vol.188, p. 108
- 10 Boyd. A Footnote..., p.69; see Gray to Tate, 2 Feb 1921; Auckland Star, 2 Feb 1921, IT1:25/1/2(1)
- 11 Northedge, pp.196-198. See LNOJ. SS81. 10th Assembly. 6th Cmte, p.21
- 12 Who's Who in New Zealand.... 3rd ed, p.183; Gray to Allen, 7 Jun 1922, IT1:79/73. Berendsen considered that Gray had no qualifications to head the department. Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4

- 13 Boyd. The Record..., pp.127-130,132-133; Keesing, F.M. Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934, pp.100-102,110-113
- 14 Boyd. The Record..., pp.130-134
- 15 Bell to Richardson, 31 Mar 1924, IT1:1/32(1)
- 16 Gray to Tate, 20 Nov 1920, IT1:25/1/1(1)
- 17 Massey to Sec-Gen, 24 Nov 1921, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 18 League of Nations. Permanent Mandates Commission(hereafter cited as LNPMC). Rules of Procedure, 19 Oct 1921, C.404.N.7.295.1921.VI(revised 19 Mar 1928, C.P.M.8(2)), EA2:113/2/1(1)
- 19 Hall, pp.165-169, Chapter 12
- 20 Allen to Gray, 30 Mar 1922, IT1:79/73
- 21 LNPMC. Minutes of 2nd Session. Observations of the Commission on the Reports Relating to the Territories under C Mandates, C.551.M.333. 1922.VI, p.9; 3rd Session. Annex 13, p.324; LNOJ. 5th Yr. No.10. Oct 1924. Annex 662, pp.1410-1411. See Gray to Tate, 28 Feb 1922, Tate Papers 264:2; Tate to Gray, 13 Apr 1922; Auckland Star, 10 Oct 1922, IT1:25/2; Evening Post, 22 Oct 1923, IT1:25/1/10(1)
- 22 Richardson to Gray, 24 Mar 1926, IT1:79/78(2)
- 23 For the Mandate Reports see files IT1:25/1-25/26. They were published from 1922 in AJHR. A-4
- 24 Allen to Massey, 11 Aug 1922, IT1:25/1/10(1)
- 25 LN. 3rd Assembly. 11th Plenary meeting, 19 Sep 1922, pp.145-147; see NZPD, 14 Jun 1923, Vol.200, p.2
- 26 Bell to Rappard, 20,25 Sep 1922; Rappard to Bell, 21,28 Sep 1922, quoted in Report by E.O. Mousley(Bell's Pvre.Sec) to Massey, 1 Jun 1923, pp.47-56, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 27 Massey to Allen, 27 Nov 1922, IT1:25/1/10(1); see Bell to Sec-Gen, 24 Sep 1926, IT1:25/1/10(3)
- 28 LNPMC. 9th Session. 6th meeting, 11 Jun 1926, p.51; 8th meeting, 11 Jun 1926, p.54; Annexes 2,3,9
- 29 Ibid, 7th meeting, 11 Jun 1926, p.51; Annex 10
- 30 LNOJ. 7th Yr. No.10. Oct 1926. 41st Council, 3rd meeting, 3 Sep 1926, pp.1231-1236
- 31 Ibid, 4th meeting, 4 Sep 1926, pp.1239-1240

- 32 NZ Delegates' Report on 7th Assembly, 25 Oct 1926, p.54, EA2:114/3/2 (3)
- 33 Imp Conf 1926, Principal Delegates, 5th meeting, 21 Oct 1926, G40:4
- 34 Imp Conf 1926, Mandates Cmte, 1st meeting, 27 Oct 1926, EA2:113/2/1 (1); E122. Mandates Cmte. Report, Appendix, G40:4
- 35 J.S. Hunter(Bell's Pvte.Sec) to Thomson, 18 Nov 1926; Coates to Stewart(Acting PM), 20 Nov 1926; Knowles to Berendsen, 24 Nov 1926, EA2:113/2/6(1)
- 36 See LN. Work of the PMC during its 9th Session. Observations of Governments Regarding the Question of the Hearing of Petitioners and the List of Questions for the Annual Reports for Territories under B and C Mandates, C.643.M.250.1926.VI, EA2:113/2/6(1)
- 37 NZPD, 8 Jul 1927, Vol.212, pp.415-421
- 38 Evening Post, 15 Oct 1926; see Sydney Morning Herald, 11 May 1927, IT1:25/13(1)
- 39 Press, 3 Jun 1927, IT1:25/13(1)
- 40 Ibid, 2 Jun 1927
- 41 J.V. Wilson to Berendsen, 17 Aug 1927, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 42 LNPMC. 12th Session. 8th meeting, 28 Oct 1927, p.57
- 43 LNPMC. 11th Session. 21st meeting, 2 Jul 1927, pp.167-169; Annex 6, p.200
- 44 Stewart, pp.256-257
- 45 SSDA to GGNZ, 18 May 1926, enc. A. Chamberlain to Lord D'Abernon (British Ambassador to Germany), 24 Apr 1926, IT1:25/1/2(2)
- 46 Imp Conf 1926, E122. Mandates Cmte. Report, G40:4
- 47 SSDA to GGNZ, 13 May 1927, EA2:113/2/2(1)
- 48 GGNZ to SSDA, 25 May 1927; SSDA to GGNZ, 4 Jun 1927; GGNZ to SSDA, 7 Jun 1927, EA2:113/2/2(1)
- 49 SSDA to GGNZ, 18 Jun 1927; Evening Post, 16 Jun 1927, EA2:113/2/2(1)
- 50 Macdonald, p.15; Agreement between His Majesty's Government in London, His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, and His Majesty's Government of the Dominion of New Zealand with regard to the Island of Nauru. AJHR. 1919, H-29C
- 51 LNPMC. 2nd Session. 7th meeting, 4 Aug 1922, pp.36-39; 8th meeting, 5 Aug 1922, pp.45-48; 11th meeting, 7 Aug 1922, p.55; Observations

- of the Commission on the Reports Relating to the Territories under C Mandates, C.551.M.333.1922.VI, p.4-5. The questioning was led by William Ormsby-Gore, who had also led the campaign against the Nauru Agreement in the House of Commons. Hudson, W.J., pp.157-159
- 52 LNPMC. 2nd Session. 11th meeting, 7 Aug 1922, pp.56-57
- 53 LN. Report on the Second Session submitted to the Council on behalf of the Commission by the Chairman, the Marquis Theodoli, C.550.M.332.1922.VI, p.3
- 54 See LN. 3rd Assembly. 6th Cmte, Annex 7
- 55 See SSCols to GGNZ, 18 May 1923, IT1:25/1/10(1); Bell to W. Nosworthy(Min.Ext.Affairs), 15 Jun 1926, IT1:25/1/10(3). Nauruan affairs were handled by the Department of Agriculture until 1923 when the responsibility was given to External Affairs. NZPD, 5 Oct 1920, Vol.188, p.223; Gray to Thomson, 5 Jul 1923, IT1:25/1/10(1)
- 56 Field, M.J. Mau: Samoa's Struggle Against New Zealand Oppression. Wellington: Reed, 1984, pp.30-33,54-56
- 57 See NZPD, 23 Sep 1920, Vol.187, pp.1206-1208; 28 Sep 1920, Vol.188, pp.24-29; 27 Oct 1921, Vol.191, pp.878ff; 9 Oct 1922, Vol.197, pp.690-691. For press opinion see file IT1:37/2
- 58 LNPMC. 2nd Session. 8th meeting, 5 Aug 1922, pp.41-42; Report on the 2nd Session...by...the Marquis Theodoli, p.4
- 59 LN. 3rd Assembly. 12th Plenary meeting, 20 Sep 1922, pp.158-159
- 60 LNPMC. 4th Session. Annex 3, pp.174-175; 5th Session. 7th meeting, 27 Oct 1924, pp.49-50
- 61 See copy in Report on 1st Assembly, EA2:114/3/2(1)
- 62 LNPMC. 7th Session. 3rd meeting, 20 Oct 1925, p.23; Annex 4b, pp.154-156
- 63 LNPMC. 10th Session, 4th meeting, 5 Nov 1926, pp.28-30; Annex 3, pp.164-172; Annex 9, p.188
- 64 Parr to Director, Mandates Section, 16 Nov 1926, LNOJ. 8th Yr. No.4. Apr 1927. 44th Council, Annex 937c, p.437
- 65 Parr to Director, Mandates Section, 13 Sep 1927, LN. Mandates, C.494 1927.VI
- 66 Coates to Parr, 30 Jan 1928, IT1:25/1/10(4). See Gray to Col. J. Hutchen(Sec.Samoan Admin.), 27 Jan 1927, EA1:311/6/6(1); Coates to Parr, 18 May 1927, IT1:25/15
- 67 LNPMC. 12th Session. 18th meeting, 4 Nov 1927, pp.117-118; Parr to Director, Mandates Section, 7 Jun 1928, LN. Mandates, C.323.1928.VI

- 68 Berendsen to Clinkard, 18 Oct 1929, IT1:25/15
- 69 Clinkard to Berendsen, 11 Nov 1929; Berendsen to Clinkard, 10 Dec 1929, IT1:25/15
- 70 Northedge, p.186; A. Turnbull(Sec.Samoan Admin.) to Berendsen, 28 Mar 1931, IT1:25/15
- 71 On the Reparation Estates see file IT1:61/19(5-9); Bell to Allen, 14 May 1924, IT1:25/1/18
- 72 Gray to Sec.Treasury, 6 Apr 1926, IT1:25/11; LNPMC. 7th Session. 3rd meeting, 20 Oct 1925, p.19
- 73 The Crown Estates totalled 103,630 acres.
- 74 LNPMC. 4th Session. 9th meeting, 28 Jun 1924, pp.73-74; 5th Session. 7th meeting, 27 Oct 1924, pp.53-54; 7th Session. 4th meeting, 20 Oct 1925, p.29; Annex 6, pp.159-160
- 75 LNPMC. 5th Session. 7th meeting, 27 Oct 1924, p.53; 12th Session. Annex 5
- 76 S.J. Smith(Acting Sec.Ext.Affairs) to Gray, 26 May 1925, IT1:79/86; Smith to Hutchen, 18 Jun 1925, IT1:79/76(1); Order-in-Council, 15 Mar 1926, IT1:61/19(9)
- 77 Bell to Sec-Gen, 12 May 1926, IT1:25/11; Bell to Sec-Gen, 3 Mar 1926, IT1:25/1/10(3)
- 78 Gray to Richardson, 3 Mar 1926, IT1:25/11. See 1926 Mandate Report. IT1:25/6
- 79 Gray to Bell, 19 Feb 1926, IT1:25/1/10(3); NZPD, 11 Aug 1926, Vol. 210, pp.342-343; see LNPMC. 14th Session. 5th meeting, 29 Oct 1928, pp.46-47
- 80 LNPMC. 3rd Session. 10th meeting, 25 Jul 1923, pp.58-60; 24th meeting, 3 Aug 1923, pp.173-174; 30th meeting, 8 Aug 1923, pp.198-199; Allen to Gray, 28 Sep 1923, IT1:79/73. The Samoan debt was £87,000 in 1923. 4th Session, 9th meeting, 28 Jun 1924, p.77
- 81 Allen to Gen. A.W. Robin, 28 Sep 1923, IT1:79/73; Dominion, 2 Jul 1924, IT1:25/1/10(2)
- 82 Gray to Richardson, 11 Jul 1924, IT1:79/78(1)
- 83 Bell to Richardson, 29 Jan 1925, IT1:67/12/57
- 84 LNPMC. 7th Session. 3rd meeting, 20 Oct 1925, p.17; Gray to Smith, 15 Sep, 29 Oct 1925, IT1:79/86
- 85 Gray to Hutchen, 28 Dec 1925, IT1:79/76(1)

- 86 Bell to Richardson, 8 Oct 1925, IT1:1/32(1); Ext.Affairs to GGNZ, Nov 1925, IT1:2/9(1); GGNZ to Coates, 11 Jun 1926, IT1:1/23/6; Gray to Tate, 17 Jan 1928, Tate Papers 264:4; Boyd. The Record..., pp. 134,142-144
- 87 See Boyd, M. Racial Attitudes of New Zealand Officials in Western Samoa. New Zealand Journal of History. 21.2, Apr 1987, pp.139-155
- 88 Boyd. The Record..., pp.119-120,123; Field, Chapters 4 & 5; Davidson, J.W. Samoa Mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.104ff
- 89 Field, Chapters 6 & 7; Boyd. The Record..., pp.142-150; Meleisea, M. The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987, Chapter 6; Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4. On the unrest see files IT1:1/23/8(1-23); EA1:311/3/7(1-10)
- 90 Petition from Laga'aia et al, 11 Mar 1927, IT1:1/45(1)
- 91 Richardson to Hutchen, 16 Aug 1927, attached minute by Bell, 22 Aug 1927, IT1:1/23/8(7). On the Royal Commission see files IT1:1/46(1-2); EA1:311/3/7(2-3)
- 92 Nosworthy to Nelson, 13 Dec 1926, IT1:1/23/8(2); Nosworthy to Richardson, 12 Jan 1927, IT1:1/33/1(1)
- 93 Field, Chapter 7
- 94 Bell to Richardson, 29 Jul 1927, IT1:1/23/8(6)
- 95 NZPD, 28 Jun 1927, Vol.212, pp.85-100; 19 Jul 1927, pp.669-690; 22 Jul 1927, pp.831-907; O'Farrell, pp.172ff. For press reaction see file EA1:311/3/7(1)
- 96 Northedge, p.201
- 97 Parr to Stewart, 19 Nov 1926, IT1:25/1/10(3)
- 98 Parr to OSC, 2,18 Jul 1927, EA1:311/3/7(1); Parr to Coates, 10 Aug 1927, EA1:311/3/7(2)
- 99 Coates to Parr, 5 Jul 1927, EA1:311/3/7(1)
- 100 Coates to Fergusson, 16 Jul 1927, EA1:311/3/7(1)
- 101 Parr to OSC, 12 Aug 1927; Coates to Parr, 10 Aug 1927, EA1:311/3/7(2); Parr to OSC, 19 Sep 1927, EA1:111/16/5(1)
- 102 LNOJ. SS60. 8th Assembly. 6th Cmte, 5th meeting, 16 Sep 1927, pp.19-20
- 103 NZPD, 28 Jun 1927, Vol.212, p.91

- 104 LNPMC. 12th Session. 16th meeting, 3 Nov 1927, pp.103-104
- 105 Ibid, pp.105-108; 17th meeting, 3 Nov 1927, pp.108-110; 18th meeting, 4 Nov 1927, p.123
- 106 Report of Visit by Hon. W. Nosworthy, Minister of External Affairs, to Western Samoa. AJHR. 1927, A-4B
- 107 Cf. Coates to Parr, 30 Jan 1928, IT1:25/1/10(4)
- 108 See Parr to Director, Mandates Section, 18 Nov 1927, LNPMC. 12th Session. Comments on the Commission's Observations by the Accredited Representatives of NZ and Great Britain, C.582.M.206.1927.VI
- 109 Parr to Coates, 8 Nov 1927, IT1:25/1/10(4); Parr to Coates, 16 Nov 1927, EA1:311/3/7(3); Parr to Coates, 20 Jun 1927, IT1:1/64(1)
- 110 LNPMC. 12th Session. Annex 10, p.203
- 111 'Report of Royal Commission into the Administration of Western Samoa', 29 Nov 1927, IT1:1/46(2). Published in AJHR. 1928, A-4B
- 112 Richardson to Coates, 15 Dec 1927; Coates to Richardson, 15 Dec 1927, IT1:1/23/8(8)
- 113 See file IT1:1/23/8(10)
- 114 Field, Chapters 9-11
- 115 On reverse of cable Ext.Affairs to Richardson, 19 Dec 1927, there is a pencilled note: "Alternative - Get rid of Richardson", nd, author unknown, EA1:311/3/7(4)
- 116 Berendsen to Coates, 28 Feb 1928, EA1:311/3/7(5). Richardson's term expired in March but he had intended to stay in Western Samoa at least until June 1928. Richardson to Bell, 18 Jan 1928, EA1:311/3/7(4)
- 117 Press statement by Coates, 22 Mar 1928, IT1:1/23/8(11)
- 118 Evening Post, 2 May 1928, EA1:311/3/7(7)
- 119 See Coates to Col. S.S. Allen(Administrator), 23 May 1928, EA1:311/3/7(7)
- 120 Gray to Berendsen, 13 Feb 1928; Coates to Parr, 13 Feb 1928, EA1:311/3/7(5); Parr to OSC, 15 Feb 1928, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 121 Coates to Col. Allen, 8 Jun 1928, EA1:311/3/7(7)
- 122 Coates to Parr, 15 May 1928, IT1:25/14
- 123 Parr to PMD, 21 Jun 1928, IT1:25/14. See Nelson, O.F. Samoa at Geneva: Misleading the League of Nations. Auckland: National Printing Co, 1929



- 124 LNPMC. 13th Session. 13th-16th meetings, 20-22 Jun 1928, pp.97-138
- 125 Parr to PMD, 25 Jun 1928, IT1:25/14
- 126 The League received petitions from: Anti-Slavery & Aborigines Protection Soc.(19 Jul 1927), IT1:1/63; Tuimaleali'ifano et al(9 Mar 1928), IT1:1/61; O.F. Nelson(29 Mar 1928), IT1:1/59
- 127 Coates to Sec-Gen, 27 Sep 1928, IT1:1/63
- 128 Petition from Anti-Slavery & Aborigines Protection Soc. to League, 8 Jun 1928, IT1:1/63
- 129 Parr to PMD, 25 Jun 1928, IT1:25/14
- 130 Richardson to Berendsen, 3 Jul 1928, EA1:311/3/7(7)
- 131 Wilson to Berendsen, 9 Jul 1928, EA2:114/6/1(1)
- 132 LNPMC. 13th Session. Annex 7, p.230; LNOJ. 9th Yr. No.10. Oct 1928. 51st Council, 3rd meeting, 1 Sep 1928, p.1450
- 133 Berendsen to Coates, 5 Jul 1928, EA1:311/3/7(7); Berendsen to Wilson, 30 Aug 1928, EA2:114/6/1(1). See Coates to Parr, 5 Jul(draft), 10 Jul 1928, EA1:311/3/7(7)
- 134 LNPMC. 14th Session. 4th meeting, 29 Oct 1928, pp.37-44; Parr to PMD, 1 Nov 1928, EA1:311/3/7(8); Parr to Coates, 5 Nov 1928, IT1:25/1/10(5)
- 135 Verschaffelt, Park & Berendsen to Ward, 15 Jan 1929; 'Finances and Staff of the Samoan Administration', 15 Jan 1929, EA1:311/9/10(1). Some parts of the report were deleted before publication in AJHR. 1929, A-4B
- 136 Berendsen to Ward, 12 Jul 1929, EA1:311/3/7(8). See Gray to Richardson, 7 Mar 1929, published in NZ Herald & Dominion, 11 Mar 1929, IT1:1/49(1); NZPD, 29 Aug 1929, Vol.222, pp.585-596. For press reaction see file IT1:1/49/1(1)
- 137 Ward to Parr, 28 Feb 1929. Parr was not informed of the report's findings before it was released. Parr to PMD, 12 Apr 1929; Ward to Parr, 26 Apr 1929, IT1:1/49(1)
- 138 Parr to PMD, 15 Apr 1929; Parr to PMD, 10 Jun 1929, attached minute by Berendsen, 11 Jun 1929, EA1:62/201/1(1A)
- 139 Allen to Berendsen, 22 Feb 1929, G48:S/17(1)
- 140 Fergusson to Ward, 17 Mar 1929, G48:S/17(1)
- 141 Ward to Fergusson, 1 May 1929, G48:S/17(1)

- 142 Ward to Parr, 12 Jul 1929, EA1:311/3/7(9)
- 143 LNPMC. 16th Session. 13th meeting, 13 Nov 1929, p.97; 16th meeting, 15 Nov 1929, p.111; 17th meeting, 15 Nov 1929, pp.119-120
- 144 Berendsen to Sec.Samoan Admin, 16 May 1929, IT1:25/9
- 145 LNPMC. 16th Session. 16th-17th meetings, 15 Nov 1929, pp.112-119
- 146 Ibid, 17th-18th meetings, 15-16 Nov 1929, pp.120-125; Parr to PMD, 18 Nov 1929, EA1:311/3/7(9); Parr to Ward, 22 Nov 1929, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 147 NZPD, 6 Sep 1929, Vol.222, pp.903-907
- 148 LNPMC. 16th Session. 18th meeting, 16 Nov 1929, p.126
- 149 Ibid, Annex 12, pp.207-208
- 150 Parr to Director, Mandates Section, 2 Dec 1929, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 151 Wilford to Forbes, 17 Jul 1930, IT1:1/51. These petitions were from: Rev. A.J. Greenwood(19 May 1930), IT1:1/51; Women's Int. League for Peace & Freedom(18 Sep 1930), IT1:1/52; O.F. Nelson(19 May 1930), IT1:1/58; E.W. Gurr & W. Cooper(6 Oct 1930), IT1:1/54
- 152 Berendsen to Sec.Samoan Admin, 17 Mar 1930, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 153 Sir T. Sidey to Allen, 13 May 1930; Forbes to Allen, 2 Jun 1930, IT1:25/10
- 154 Allen to Forbes, 6,19 Jun 1930, IT1:25/10
- 155 Forbes to Allen, 1 Jul 1930, EA1:311/3/6(1); Berendsen to Forbes, 24 Jul 1930, IT1:25/10
- 156 Field, Chapters 14-16. See Ward to Sec-Gen, 28 Jan 1930, IT1:1/23/8(15)
- 157 Field, Chapter 17
- 158 LNPMC. 19th Session. 5th-6th meetings, 6 Nov 1930, pp.47-56; Annex 18, p.211. Berendsen thought the PMC a competent if somewhat cynical body of experts, who were knowledgeable and understanding of the the Samoan situation. Berendsen. Reminiscences of an Ambassador, Book 4
- 159 Field, Chapters 18-19
- 160 Berendsen to Knowles, 2 Jul 1931, EA1:311/3/7(9)
- 161 LNPMC. 20th Session. 18th meeting, 5 Nov 1931, pp.145-147

- 162 See Berendsen to Turnbull, 15 May 1931, IT1:25/16; Berendsen to Turnbull, 11 May 1932, IT1:25/17; Turnbull to Berendsen, 1 Jun 1932, EA1:311/3/6(3); Berendsen to Turnbull, 30 May 1935, IT1:25/21
- 163 See Forbes to Wilford, 13 Jul 1931, IT1:25/16; Forbes to Wilford, 15 Jul 1932, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 164 Berendsen to Knowles, 2 Jul 1931, EA1:311/3/7(9)
- 165 Berendsen to Knowles, 21 Jul 1932, EA1:311/3/6(3)
- 166 Allen to Forbes, 9 Mar 1931, EA1:311/3/6(2)
- 167 Wilford to Forbes, 11 Nov 1931, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 168 Wilford to Forbes, 21 Nov 1932, IT1:25/1/23(1)
- 169 Neither the Covenant nor the texts of the mandates ruled out visits by the PMC but it was given no encouragement to do so. Hall, pp.204-205. See Jordan to PMD, 14 Oct 1937; Savage to Jordan, 26 Oct 1937, IT1:25/1/23(3)
- 170 Turnbull to Berendsen, 10 May 1935, EA1:311/3/6(4); Turnbull to Berendsen, 7 Jun 1935, IT1:25/21. See Knowles to Berendsen, 15 Nov 1934, IT1:25/1/23(2); Knowles to Berendsen, 26 Aug 1935, EA2:114/2/2(1)
- 171 Berendsen to Turnbull, 20 May 1935, EA1:311/3/6(4)
- 172 See Forbes to Wilford, 15 Jul 1932, IT1:25/1/23(1); Ransom to Parr, 26 Jun 1935, IT1:25/21; Berendsen to Turnbull, 10 Jan 1936, EA1:311/3/6(5)
- 173 See Berendsen to Turnbull, 20 May 1933, EA1:311/3/6(3); Turnbull to Berendsen, 31 May 1933, IT1:25/18
- 174 LNPMC. 26th Session. 15th meeting, 7 Nov 1934, pp.122-123; Knowles to Berendsen, 15 Nov 1934; Auckland Star, 22 Apr 1935; Berendsen to Ransom, late Apr 1935, IT1:25/1/23(2); Berendsen to Turnbull, 3 May 1935, EA1:311/3/6(4)
- 175 Berendsen to Turnbull, 31 May 1935, EA1:311/3/6(4); Turnbull to Berendsen, 7 Jun 1935, IT1:25/21
- 176 Wilson to Avenol, 24 Apr 1935, pp.4-6; Berendsen to Wilson, 15 Aug 1935, EA2:114/8/3(1). Wilson stated later: "I do not think that there was a single weakness of the New Zealand administration to which the Commission did not apply a sure if somewhat feline touch." Wilson, J.V., p.64
- 177 See 'The Tragi-Comedy of Samoa', Ext.Affairs memo, c. early 1936, Nash Papers 162/0004-5

- 178 Field, pp.212-215; Meleisea, p.149; see file IT1:1/65(1); 'Report to PM of Official Visit to Western Samoa by F. Langstone & J. O'Brien', 15 Sep 1936, Nash Papers 2133/0136
- 179 Jordan to Savage, 21 Oct 1936, PM16:1. Jordan never attended a session of the PMC.
- 180 LNPMC. 30th Session. 11th meeting, 4 Nov 1936, pp.112-115
- 181 LNOJ. 18th Yr. No.2. Feb 1937. 96th Council, 3rd meeting, 25 Jan 1937, pp.87-88
- 182 'Thoughts on Conversation between Lugard and Nash(9 Feb 1937)', 15 Feb 1937, Nash Papers 2133/0136
- 183 LNPMC. 33rd Session. Annex 20, p.177
- 184 See Press, 18 Nov 1937, National Party Papers 1096:Box 65
- 185 Turnbull to Savage, 22 Oct 1937, IT1:25/24
- 186 Jordan to Savage, 15 Nov 1937, 8 Nov 1938, IT1:25/1/23(3)
- 187 Berendsen to Turnbull, 20 Dec 1937, EA1:311/3/6(5)
- 188 LNPMC. 35th Session. 18th meeting, 4 Nov 1938, pp.164-165
- 189 Ibid, Annex 14
- 190 LNPMC. 37th Session. 2nd meeting, 12 Nov 1939, p.15; Annex 4
- 191 Boyd. The Record..., pp.183-184
- 192 Gray to Hutchen, 28 Jan 1926, IT1:79/76(1)
- 193 Stewart, pp.221-222

## EPILOGUE

The outbreak of the Second World War sounded the death knell of the League. A skeletal Secretariat remained in existence in Geneva during the war but several of its sections moved to the United States and Britain.<sup>1</sup> The International Labour Organisation transferred its headquarters to Canada. As a gesture of faith in the League, New Zealand was one of the few members which continued to pay its contributions during the war years.<sup>2</sup> Yet it was clear that the League's ineffectiveness during the crises of the late 1930s and its inability to prevent the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1939 made it extremely unlikely that it would be revived after the war. Nevertheless, the concept of an international security organisation was still very much alive. The New Zealand Government was determined that any successor to the League should be based as closely as possible on the League Covenant.

New Zealand was not directly involved in the wartime conferences of the 'Big Four' Allied Powers which discussed the question of a new security organisation but the British did seek the Dominion's views. What is most striking is that the 1936 Reform Memorandum was, as Deputy Prime Minister Nash described it, the "cornerstone" of the New Zealand Government's policy.<sup>3</sup> At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting in London in May 1944, Fraser declared that there was no divergence between the views expressed by the government in 1936 and its present attitude. He opposed British plans which emphasised the role of regional security organisations, omitted specific pledges and military commitments by the

new international body, and strengthened the Council at the Assembly's expense.<sup>4</sup>

Berendsen, now New Zealand Minister at Washington, reaffirmed this position three months later, just before the talks between Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union at Dumbarton Oaks near Washington. He told the British representatives that New Zealand had strong views on the problem of world organisation, the solution of which it considered to be fundamental to every other postwar problem. The Dominion believed there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the Covenant, and that "if we were to attempt to draw up a plan for a new organisation we would begin by taking a copy of the Covenant and a pencil, and we would not pencil very much...[T]he closer we could keep to the Covenant the more likely the new organisation would be to prove effective and lasting." He said that the failure of the League had been a moral failure; the members had not been prepared to fulfil the undertakings they had accepted.

Berendsen was particularly concerned that the British proposals contained no firm undertaking by all members of the new organisation to guarantee the territorial integrity and political independence of every member-state, and to meet aggression by collective action. Too much emphasis was being placed on the Great Powers and not enough on the smaller powers, and yet it had been the former which had killed the League.<sup>5</sup> Berendsen was dismayed that the three Great Powers' efforts to base the new body on the "most wide and indefinite principle" meant that there would be no prior commitments and that the response to any future aggression would be determined by whoever was on the Council at the

time.<sup>6</sup> The parallel with the 1936 British Covenant reform proposals was marked. He told Wellington that such a plan would hardly receive an enthusiastic reception from the smaller powers.

New Zealand believed that the question of what was to replace the League was not simply a political question but a moral one as well. Speaking in New York in January 1945, Berendsen said that

the League failed because of a false and vicious idea that international morality differs in some way from individual morality...The supreme problem..[is] how to abolish for all time this wicked insanity of war...It is a moral problem...If we fail to solve it as a moral problem we will solve it permanently in no other way.<sup>7</sup>

At the San Francisco conference to construct a charter for the new international body, held between April and June 1945, the New Zealand delegation, led by Fraser, pressed for the charter to include a declaration that all members undertook collectively to resist every act of aggression against any member. The other delegates were warned that to omit this principle would be to invite a repetition of the League's failure, through evasion, appeasement and the sacrifice of smaller and less influential peoples. The New Zealanders vigorously promoted their views at the conference, often coming into conflict with the British and Americans, but to their great disappointment the proposal was again rejected.<sup>8</sup>

Fraser believed that the failure to include a definite statement supporting collective security was the United Nations Charter's most conspicuous defect. He told the first session of the General Assembly in London in February 1946 that, despite its many achievements, the League had failed to stop worldwide aggression in its initial stages and

had finally collapsed. The fear of millions of people was that the United Nations would tread the same disastrous path. Fraser warned that there were unfortunate signs that states were still not prepared to subordinate national interests to the common good.<sup>9</sup> The implication was that the world had not yet learned the lessons taught by the failure of the League.

In spite of the government's loud advocacy of the principles of the Covenant, the last Assembly of the League in April 1946 was largely ignored. The League had been superseded by the United Nations; it was a ghost which had to be laid to rest. Perhaps the fact that the New Zealand delegation comprised only Charles Knowles and George R. Laking, Second Secretary in the Department of External Affairs, because Jordan was delayed on his return to Europe from New Zealand,<sup>10</sup> sums up the low-key New Zealand reaction to the League's final act. Addressing the Assembly on 11 April 1946, Knowles said that the Twenty-First Session was an occasion for poignancy not despair. He felt that there had been a disinclination to acknowledge the League's achievements and an attempt to distance the new organisation from the old. This was wrong, for he believed that it was important to profit from the experience and mistakes at Geneva. Clearly, the spirit which had guided those who framed the Covenant equally guided those who framed the United Nations Charter. Noting that the dissolution of the League also meant the end of the Permanent Mandates Commission, Knowles reaffirmed New Zealand's intention to place its administration of Western Samoa under the international trusteeship of the United Nations.<sup>11</sup>



After disposing of the various administrative matters involved in winding up the League and transferring its functions to the United Nations, the Assembly closed for the last time on 18 April 1946. Tainted by the debacles of its final years, the League rapidly drifted into the shadows of history. New Zealand's participation in the League and the Geneva institution's influence on the Dominion's foreign policy also fell into obscurity. Only now are both beginning to receive their proper recognition.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Walters, pp.809-810
- 2 NZPD, 14 Sep 1945, Vol.269, p.841
- 3 Nash, W. New Zealand: A Working Democracy. Melbourne: George Jaboor, 1943, p.48
- 4 Fraser to Berendsen, 8 Aug 1944, quoted in O'Shea, J.D. New Zealand's Part in the Establishment of an International Security Organisation. I. War Narrative. 1949-1950, pp.27-29
- 5 Berendsen to Fraser, 16 Aug 1944, quoted in O'Shea. New Zealand's Part...I, pp.32-34
- 6 Berendsen to Fraser, 25 Aug 1944, quoted in O'Shea. New Zealand's Part...I, p.42
- 7 Time, 8 Jan 1945, Vol.45, p.54
- 8 United Nations Conference on International Organisation. Report on the Conference held at San Francisco 25 April-26 June 1945 by the Rt. Hon. Peter Fraser, Chairman of the New Zealand Delegation. AJHR. 1945, A-2, pp.18-19, passim
- 9 United Nations. Report of New Zealand Delegation on the First Part of the First Regular Session of the General Assembly held at London 10 January-14 February 1946. AJHR. 1946, A-2, p.10
- 10 Report of the New Zealand Delegates on the Adjourned Twentieth and Twenty-First(Final) Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations held at Geneva 8-18 April 1946. AJHR. 1946, A-5, p.1
- 11 LNOJ. SS194. 21st Assembly. 4th Plenary meeting, 11 Apr 1946, pp.42-43

## CONCLUSION

New Zealand became a member of the League of Nations more by accident than design. Its involvement was as a consequence of the ambitions of the other Dominions, not New Zealand's. Content with its status within the British Empire, the Dominion was uninterested in the trap-pings of autonomy which Canada and South Africa sought. Yet just as the League provided the opportunity for these more independently-minded Dominions to make their mark on the international stage, so the develop-ment of a separate New Zealand identity was hastened by its membership of the League.

Outwardly there was little evidence of that development during the 1920s and early 1930s. New Zealand's foreign policy was, for the most part, made in London. For the Dominion, a policy based on the British Empire was simple, pragmatic, and narrow in focus. But as the League came to influence the policies of the British Government more and more during the 1920s, so it was inevitable that New Zealand would be affected also. The Dominion's dependence on Britain for its security and prosperity made it unlikely that it would actively oppose British policy. Yet it was prepared at times to criticise the British Govern-ment privately in quite strong terms. New Zealand's support for Britain depended on a perceived commonality of interest centred on the mutual benefits a strong and united Empire conferred on all its members. The New Zealand Government was prepared to allow the British Government to act on its behalf so long as the policies it promoted conformed with the

Empire's best interests as New Zealand saw them.

This depended to a significant extent on a substantial identity of political colour between London and Wellington. The apparent acquiescence of the New Zealand Government with the policies of the governments of Lloyd George and Baldwin reveals a confidence that these administrations understood New Zealand's views without the necessity of being constantly reminded of them. It was no coincidence that New Zealand's most significant differences of opinion with Britain over League policy before 1936 occurred when the Labour Party held office there. During these periods, the New Zealand policy of being plus royaliste que le roi, as F.L.W. Wood has described it, was most apparent.<sup>1</sup> At such times, the New Zealand Government assumed the role of the conscience of the British Government by reminding it where its primary duty lay when British actions at Geneva appeared to threaten the interests of the Empire.

New Zealand's participation in the League had an essentially negative character during these years. Because the Dominion was little interested in moral or ideological considerations, it was suspicious of the much vaunted objectives of the League, especially since they seemed to depend for their success on the power of the British Empire. The British Labour Government's flirtations with the League did nothing to allay New Zealand's concern that Britain might forsake its commitment to the security of the Empire for the uncertain benefits offered by the new international body.

When the British Government pursued policies in which the Empire was the primary consideration and the League took a back seat, it could depend on New Zealand's active support. For example, the Dominion offered troops during the Chanak crisis, money to help build the Singapore Naval Base, and political backing for the Locarno treaties. Conversely, when the British Government seemed prepared to subordinate the Empire's interests to those of the League, New Zealand was implacably opposed. On the Geneva Protocol, the Optional Clause and the 1929 security and arbitration treaties, the Dominion attempted to act as a brake on Labour's impetuosity, warning of the dire consequences of relying on agreements based primarily on good intentions. New Zealand did not believe that the interests of the League, dominated as it was by European states, were necessarily compatible with those of the British Empire. Indeed the League was regarded as a rival. The Dominion feared it would lose the protection of Britain it had long taken for granted, as the British were compelled to honour their security obligations to the League in other parts of the world.

New Zealand's attitude towards the League changed from hostility to detached acceptance during the 1920s, but it did not become apathetic. The governments of Coates and Forbes could not afford to ignore the League's impact on international affairs. New Zealand was as active as any of the other Dominions in voicing its opinions on the issues concerning the Empire at Geneva. In many ways, the policy followed by the New Zealand Labour Government was simply a continuation and development of this involvement rather than a completely new phenomenon.

When Labour came to power in 1935 the world was already being threatened by the Fascist powers. No state, not even the Great Powers, was prepared to face the challenge alone. For the Savage Government the League was the obvious body to co-ordinate a common front to contain Fascist aggressiveness. Admittedly, Labour had long supported internationalism but collective security was not simply an ideal. It was seen as a practical answer to the growing menace to peace. Better to halt the aggressors at an early stage by a show of strength than to allow them to build up and consolidate their power by following a policy of appeasement which only put off the inevitable confrontation. Just as previous New Zealand governments had opposed British policies they considered incompatible with the security of the Empire, so Labour's opposition to appeasement had as much to do with its concern for the future of the Commonwealth as with internationalist zeal.

There is no question that Savage and his colleagues considered collective security to be the right policy and that it was morally unacceptable to condone aggression through appeasement. But Bruce Bennett's description of New Zealand's foreign policy in this period as a "moral foreign policy" tends to obscure its limitations. Even he concedes that the moral aspect covered only those issues dealt with by the League.<sup>2</sup> Intensely conscious of the Dominion's remoteness from the world's trouble spots, and its relative insignificance, the Labour Government confined its comments to disputes where a collective response through the League might have been effective and where the risk of escalating the conflict was low. New Zealand's support of the legitimate governments of Ethiopia, Spain and China, though vigorous, was

confined to the League. The government remained detached from these disputes, regarding them primarily as test cases for collective security.

That there were indeed limitations to Labour's policy is revealed by the fact that although Germany's invasions of Austria and Czechoslovakia should have been referred to the League, New Zealand did not protest when these treaty violations were not. The Dominion realised it was in no position to dictate to Britain, or any other power directly threatened by Germany, the course it should take when the peace of Europe was at stake. Similarly, New Zealand never publicly criticised the British Government or voted against Britain in the League on an important issue. It is evident that the Labour Government's policy was restrained by the Dominion's membership of, and loyalty to, the Commonwealth, in much the same way as its predecessors had been.

New Zealand was not exceptional among the Dominions for its outspokenness at the League. Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State all had occasion to take a prominent part in the League's debates on particular issues. Yet because New Zealand's term on the Council coincided with a period in the League's history of unprecedented turmoil, it is not surprising that the Dominion's stand against appeasement attracted considerable attention. But did New Zealand actually have an impact on the policies followed by the League and the British Government? Alister McIntosh believed that New Zealand's views were only given prominence in the liberal press because they provided useful ammunition against the British Government and other appeasers.<sup>3</sup> One suspects there

is a lot of truth in that. New Zealand's stand may have had some moral force at Geneva,<sup>4</sup> but little more. David Carlton claims that the Dominions had almost no influence on British foreign policy during this period.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, New Zealand was never able to garner support in the Council for collective action against Italy or Japan, or to change the policy on Spain. While one might admire New Zealand's courage in advocating collective security when few powers were prepared to listen, Labour's most significant achievement was to lead the Dominion for the first time out of the British shadow in international affairs.

The security issue dominated New Zealand's relationship with the League, almost to the exclusion of any other subject. The Dominion was largely indifferent to most of the League's activities, as its poor record with regard to the International Labour Organisation illustrates. Even the Labour Government, which made a point of being represented at the annual International Labour Conferences from 1936, did not get around to ratifying the many International Labour Organisation conventions, which previous governments had ignored, until 1938.<sup>6</sup> New Zealand could not, of course, ignore the Permanent Mandates Commission, no matter how much it wanted to. The Commission was perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the Dominion's fear of League interference in its domestic affairs. New Zealand never quite accepted that the Commission's role was to protect the interests of Western Samoa's inhabitants rather than simply to find fault with the administration of the territory.

It seems clear that New Zealand's participation and image at Geneva



had less to do with Wellington than with the High Commissioners in London. Their interests and personalities were the primary influence behind the Dominion's position at the League. In the early 1920s it was Allen's obsession with financial matters which gave New Zealand a certain prominence, although one contemporary observer thought the Dominion conscientious to the point of pedantry at this time, a condition he blamed on its inexperience in international affairs.<sup>7</sup> Over a decade later, Jordan's direct and outspoken style lifted the Dominion from the relative obscurity it had fallen into during the terms of Parr and Wilford. What is most remarkable is that in spite of government indifference, and their meagre resources compared to the other Dominions, the High Commissioners were able to make any kind of impact at all at Geneva.

In light of the official ambivalence to the League, it is not surprising that the organisation stimulated minimal interest within the Dominion. Despite the efforts of the League of Nations Union and the Labour Party, the League, and international affairs in general, remained outside the general purview of the majority of New Zealanders. Their isolation, their complacency based on the power of the British Empire, and their preoccupation with domestic matters, meant that most New Zealanders gave almost no thought to events beyond their shores, or British shores, even as Japan moved ever southward during the late 1930s. The blame for this lack of interest or ignorance rests partly on successive governments during the 1920s and 1930s, Labour included. Foreign policy was not a top priority and these governments were simply not in the habit of informing Parliament, never mind the public, of

their activities in this area.

The League was a remote, ill-understood and frankly irrelevant body to all but a few officials, politicians and interested New Zealanders. The international identity which the Dominion achieved through the League was not sought deliberately but developed as New Zealand was forced to take a more active interest in foreign affairs by British involvement at Geneva. The real significance of the League to the Dominion was that it served as the catalyst for New Zealand to begin developing its own foreign policy.

## REFERENCES

1 Wood, p.15

2 Bennett, p.v

3 McIntosh to Kippenberger, 18 Dec 1947, IA1:181/9/10

4 Walters, p.736

5 Carlton. The Dominions..., p.41

6 NZPD, 2 Mar 1938, Vol.250, pp.18-57; Armstrong to MPs, 19 Feb 1938,  
Nash Papers 160/0065

7 Manning, p.150

## APPENDIX

## THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE High Contracting parties,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security -

by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,

by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,

by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and

by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all Treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another,

Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

## ARTICLE 1.

1. The original Members of the League of Nations shall be those of the signatories which are named in the Annex to this Covenant, and also such of those other States named in the Annex as shall accede without reservation to this Covenant. Such accession shall be effected by a Declaration deposited with the Secretariat within two months of the coming into force of the Covenant. Notice thereof shall be sent to all other Members of the League.

2. Any fully self-governing State, Dominion or Colony not named in the Annex may become a Member of the League if its admission is agreed to by two-thirds of the Assembly, provided that it shall give effective guarantees of its sincere intention to observe its international obligations, and shall accept such regulations as may be prescribed by the League in regard to its military, naval and air forces and armaments.

3. Any Member of the League may, after two years' notice of its intention so to do, withdraw from the League, provided that all its

international obligations and all its obligations under this Covenant shall have been fulfilled at the time of its withdrawal.

ARTICLE 2.

The action of the League under this Covenant shall be effected through the instrumentality of an Assembly and of a Council, with a permanent Secretariat.

ARTICLE 3.

1. The Assembly shall consist of representatives of the Members of the League.

2. The Assembly shall meet at stated intervals and from time to time, as occasion may require, at the seat of the League, or at such other place as may be decided upon.

3. The Assembly may deal at its meetings with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world.

4. At meetings of the Assembly each Member of the League shall have one vote and may have not more than three representatives.

ARTICLE 4.

1. The Council shall consist of representatives of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, together with representatives of four other Members of the League. These four Members of the League shall be selected by the Assembly from time to time in its discretion. Until the appointment of the representatives of the four Members of the League first selected by the Assembly, representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Spain and Greece shall be members of the Council.

2. With the approval of the majority of the Assembly, the Council may name additional Members of the League whose representatives shall always be members of the Council; the Council, with like approval, may increase the number of Members of the League to be selected by the Assembly for representation on the Council.

2A. The Assembly shall fix by a two-thirds majority the rules dealing with the election of the non-permanent Members of the Council, and particularly such regulations as relate to their term of office and the conditions of re-eligibility.

3. The Council shall meet from time to time as occasion may require, and at least once a year, at the seat of the League, or at such other place as may be decided upon.

4. The Council may deal at its meetings with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world.

5. Any Member of the League not represented on the Council shall be invited to send a representative to sit as a member at any meeting of the Council during the consideration of matters specially affecting the interests of that Member of the League.

6. At meetings of the Council, each Member of the League represented on the Council shall have one vote, and may have not more than one representative.

#### ARTICLE 5.

1. Except where otherwise expressly provided in this Covenant or by the terms of the present Treaty, decisions at any meeting of the Assembly or of the Council shall require the agreement of all the Members of the League represented at the meeting.

2. All matters of procedure at meetings of the Assembly or of the Council, including the appointment of Committees to investigate particular matters, shall be regulated by the Assembly or by the Council and may be decided by a majority of the Members of the League represented at the meeting.

3. The first meeting of the Assembly and the first meeting of the Council shall be summoned by the President of the United States of America.

#### ARTICLE 6.

1. The permanent Secretariat shall be established at the seat of the League. The Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such secretaries and staff as may be required.

2. The first Secretary-General shall be the person named in the Annex; thereafter the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the Council with the approval of the majority of the Assembly.

3. The secretaries and staff of the Secretariat shall be appointed by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council.

4. The Secretary-General shall act in that capacity at all meetings of the Assembly and of the Council.

5. The expenses of the League shall be borne by the Members of the League in the proportion decided by the Assembly.

#### ARTICLE 7.

1. The seat of the League is established at Geneva.

2. The Council may at any time decide that the seat of the League shall be established elsewhere.

3. All positions under or in connection with the League, including the Secretariat, shall be open equally to men and women.

4. Representatives of the Members of the League and officials of the League, when engaged on the business of the League, shall enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities.

5. The buildings and other property occupied by the League or its officials or by representatives attending its meetings shall be inviolable.

#### ARTICLE 8.

1. The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety, and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.

2. The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments.

3. Such plans shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years.

4. After these plans shall have been adopted by the several Governments, the limits of armaments therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the Council.

5. The Members of the League agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war is open to grave objections. The Council shall advise how the evil effects attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented, due regard being had to the necessities of those Members of the League which are not able to manufacture

the munitions and implements of war necessary for their safety.

6. The Members of the League undertake to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval and air programmes and the condition of such of their industries as are adaptable to warlike purposes.

#### ARTICLE 9.

A permanent Commission shall be constituted to advise the Council on the execution of the provisions of Articles 1 and 8 and on military, naval and air questions generally.

#### ARTICLE 10.

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve, as against external aggression, the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression, or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression, the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.

#### ARTICLE 11.

1. Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise, the Secretary-General shall, on the request of any Member of the League, forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

2. It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

#### ARTICLE 12.

1. The Members of the League agree that, if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by



the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision, or the report by the Council.

2. In any case, under this Article the award of the arbitrators or the judicial decision shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

#### ARTICLE 13.

1. The Members of the League agree that, whenever any dispute shall arise between them which they recognise to be suitable for submission to arbitration or judicial settlement, and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy, they will submit the whole subject-matter to arbitration or judicial settlement.

2. Disputes as to the interpretation of a Treaty, as to any question of international law, as to the existence of any fact which, if established, would constitute a breach of any international obligation, or as to the extent and nature of the reparation to be made for any such breach, are declared to be among those which are generally suitable for submission to arbitration or judicial settlement.

3. For the consideration of any such dispute, the Court to which the case is referred shall be the Permanent Court of International Justice, established in accordance with Article 14, or any tribunal agreed on by the parties to the dispute or stipulated in any Convention existing between them.

4. The Members of the League agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award or decision that may be rendered, and that they will not resort to war against a Member of the League which complies therewith. In the event of any failure to carry out such an award or decision, the Council shall propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto.

#### ARTICLE 14.

The Council shall formulate and submit to the Members of the League for adoption plans for the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice. The Court shall be competent to hear and determine

any dispute of an international character which the parties thereto submit to it. The Court may also give an advisory opinion upon any dispute or question referred to it by the Council or by the Assembly.

ARTICLE 15.

1. If there should arise between Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration or judicial settlement in accordance with Article 13, the Members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary-General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof.

2. For this purpose the parties to the dispute will communicate to the Secretary-General, as promptly as possible, statements of their case with all the relevant facts and papers, and the Council may forthwith direct the publication thereof.

3. The Council shall endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute, and, if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate.

4. If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council, either unanimously or by a majority vote, shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

5 Any Member of the League represented on the Council may make a public statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

6. If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

7. If the Council fails to reach a report which is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League reserve

to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

8. If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report, and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement.

9. The Council may in any case under this Article refer the dispute to the Assembly. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute provided that such request be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute to the Council.

10. In any case referred to the Assembly, all the provisions of this Article and of Article 12, relating to the action and powers of the Council, shall apply to the action and powers of the Assembly, provided that a report made by the Assembly, if concurred in by the representatives of those Members of the League represented on the Council, and of a majority of the other Members of the League, exclusive in each case of the representatives of the parties to the dispute, shall have the same force as a report by the Council concurred in by all the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute.

#### ARTICLE 16.

1. Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its Covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

2. It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenants of the League.

3. The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimise the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the Covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the Covenants of the League.

4. Any Member of the League which has violated any Covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.

#### ARTICLE 17.

1. In the event of a dispute between a Member of the League and a State which is not a Member of the League, or between States not Members of the League, the State or States not Members of the League shall be invited to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, upon such conditions as the Council may deem just. If such invitation is accepted, the provisions of Articles 12 to 16 inclusive shall be applied with such modifications as may be deemed necessary by the Council.

2. Upon such invitation being given, the Council shall immediately institute an enquiry into the circumstances of the dispute and recommend such action as may seem best and most effectual in the circumstances.

3. If a State so invited shall refuse to accept the obligations of membership of the League for the purposes of such dispute, and shall resort to war against a Member of the League, the provisions of Article 16 shall be applicable as against the State taking such action.

4. If both parties to the dispute, when so invited, refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, the Council may take such measures and make such recommendations as will prevent hostilities and will result in the settlement of the dispute.

## ARTICLE 18.

Every Treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any Member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the Secretariat, and shall, as soon as possible, be published by it. No such Treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered.

## ARTICLE 19.

The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of Treaties which have become inapplicable, and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.

## ARTICLE 20.

1. The Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings inter se which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof.

2. In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

## ARTICLE 21.

Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as Treaties of Arbitration, or regional understandings like the Monroe doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace.

## ARTICLE 22.

1. To those colonies and territories, which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of States which formerly governed them, and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation, and that

securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

2. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who, by reason of their resources, their experience, or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

3. The character of the Mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.

4. Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

5. Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases, and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.

6. There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

7. In every case of Mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the

Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

8. The degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.

9. A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the Mandates.

#### ARTICLE 23.

Subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the Members of the League:

- (a) Will endeavour to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women, and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend, and for that purpose will establish and maintain the necessary international organisations.
- (b) Undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control.
- (c) Will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children, and the traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs.
- (d) Will entrust the League with the general supervision of the trade in arms and ammunition with the countries in which the control of this traffic is necessary in the common interest.
- (e) Will make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of all Members of the League. In this connection, the special necessities of the regions devastated during the war of 1914-1918 shall be borne in mind.
- (f) Will endeavour to take steps in matters of international concern for the prevention and control of disease.

#### ARTICLE 24.

- 1. There shall be placed under the direction of the League all

international bureaux already established by general Treaties if the parties to such Treaties consent. All such international bureaux and all commissions for the regulation of matters of international interest hereafter constituted shall be placed under the direction of the League.

2. In all matters of international interest which are regulated by general conventions but which are not placed under the control of international bureaux or commissions, the Secretariat of the League shall, subject to the consent of the Council and if desired by the parties, collect and distribute all relevant information and shall render any other assistance which may be necessary or desirable.

3. The Council may include as part of the expenses of the Secretariat the expenses of any bureau or commission which is placed under the direction of the League.

#### ARTICLE 25.

The Members of the League agree to encourage and promote the establishment and co-operation of duly authorised voluntary national Red Cross organisations having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world.

#### ARTICLE 26.

1. Amendments to this Covenant will take effect when ratified by the Members of the League whose representatives compose the Council and by a majority of the Members of the League whose representatives compose the Assembly.

2. No such amendment shall bind any Member of the League which signifies its dissent therefrom, but in that case it shall cease to be a Member of the League.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PRIMARY SOURCES

1 UNPUBLISHED

## A OFFICIAL RECORDS

All records under this heading are held at National Archives, Wellington.

Army Department

AD1 - Registered Subject Files 1914-c.1930

- 51 - Publications, instructions etc.
  - 51/866/1 - Conference. League of Nations. Geneva
  - 51/866/2 - Conference. League of Nations. Geneva
  - 51/866/3 - Conference. League of Nations. Geneva

Department of External Affairs

EA1 - Registered Subject Files 1919-1949 (Originally Prime Minister's  
 EA2 - Department files, they were transferred to the new Department  
 FA - of External Affairs in 1943.)

## New Zealand Affairs

- 58 - External Relations
  - 58/1/1 - Foreign Policy. General
  - 58/370/1 - Italy. General
- 62 - New Zealand Representation Overseas
  - 62/201/2 - London. Appointment of High Commissioner
  - 62/201/37 - London. Reports on and inspection of the High Commissioner's office
- 63 - Exchange of information and publications with overseas posts
  - 63/2/15 - London. General correspondence with the External Affairs liason officer

## War

- 85 - Defence of New Zealand
  - 85/1/1 - General

## International Affairs

- 101 - International Organisations
  - 101/1/4 - Notes on the International Situation for the Prime Minister's Information (1935)
- 106 - International Law and Justice
  - 106/2/4 - Permanent Court of International Justice. Revision of the Statute of the Court

- 106/2/7 - Permanent Court of International Justice. Adoption of Optional Clause(No.36) of the Statute of the Court
- 106/2/8 - Permanent Court of International Justice. Notifications of adoption of Optional Clause
- 106/5/1 - Codifications of International Law. General
- 106/5/2 - Codifications of International Law. Representatives of the Committee of Experts to the Assembly of the League of Nations

#### 111 - Security

- 111/6/1 - Multilateral Treaty for the Renunciation of War as an instrument of national policy(Kellog-Briand Pact 1928). Preliminary information supplied by United Kingdom
- 111/6/7 - Kellog-Briand Pact 1928. Correspondence between New Zealand Government and London High Commissioner
- 111/6/9 - Kellog-Briand Pact 1928. Letters and Comments Received in New Zealand
- 111/12/9 - Reduction and Limitation of Arms. Disarmament Conference 1932. Press Comment
- 111/12/15 - Reduction and Limitation of Arms. Disarmament Conference. Information to New Zealand from British and Dominion Governments
- 111/12/16 - Reduction and Limitation of Arms. Disarmament Conference. Arrangements for New Zealand Representatives
- 111/12/17 - Reduction and Limitation of Arms. Disarmament Conference. Unofficial Correspondence received by New Zealand Government
- 111/12/18 - Reduction and Limitation of Arms. Disarmament Conference 1932. New Zealand Policy
- 111/13/2 - Model Treaty and General Convention to Improve/ Strengthen the Means of Preventing War. British and New Zealand Policy
- 111/15/1 - West Europe. General
- 111/16/3 - Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. General Protocol 1924. Reports
- 111/16/5 - Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. British Commonwealth and New Zealand Policy Previous to Establishment of General Act 1928
- 111/16/7 - Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. General Act 1928. Attitude of Commonwealth and New Zealand
- 111/16/10 - Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. Model Treaties, Collective and Bilateral, for Non-Aggression, Mutual Assistance, Conciliation, Arbitration and Judicial Settlement
- 111/17/1 - Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. Naval Disarmament Conference (following Washington Treaty). Information to New Zealand Government by High Commissioner(London) and British Government
- 111/17/5 - Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. London Naval Conference 1930

- 112 - International Labour Organisation
  - 112/1/1 - General. General
- 113 - Colonies and Mandates
  - 113/2/1 - Permanent Mandates Commission. Administration, representation
  - 113/2/2 - Permanent Mandates Commission. Administration, representation
  - 113/2/6 - Permanent Mandates Commission. Questions for Annual reports
- 114 - League of Nations
  - 114/1/1 - General. Covenant and Amendments
  - 114/1/5 - General. Channels of Communication
  - 114/1/10 - General. Gifts
  - 114/1/11 - General. Reform
  - 114/2/2 - Membership. Representation of New Zealand
  - 114/3/2 - Assembly. Reports of New Zealand Representatives at meetings
  - 114/4/2 - Council. Reports of New Zealand Representatives at meetings
  - 114/4/5 - Council. Representation
  - 114/4/9 - Council. Permanent Commission on Military, Naval and Air Questions
  - 114/6/1 - Documents. General
  - 114/7/2 - Finance. New Zealand contribution
  - 114/8/3 - Secretariat. Appointment of New Zealand Personnel

#### Imperial Affairs

- 151 - Organisation
  - 151/1/13 - General. Meetings of the Secretary of State with Dominion High Commissioners
- 152 - External Relations of the British Empire
  - 152/1/1 - General. General
- 153 - Conferences
  - 153/14/1 - Imperial Conference 1926. Convening of conference
  - 153/14/2 - Imperial Conference 1926. Agenda for the conference
  - 153/15/1 - Imperial Conference 1930. Subjects to be considered in London
  - 153/18/1 - Imperial Conference 1937. General
  - 153/18/4 - Imperial Conference 1937. Speech notes for the Prime Minister

#### Country Series

- 201 - United Kingdom
  - 201/4/19 - External Relations. Italy
  - 201/4/73 - External Relations. France
- 260 - Abyssinia
  - 260/4/2 - Political Affairs. Italian Annexation
- 264 - China
  - 264/2/7 - External Relations. Japan
- 268 - Japan
  - 268/2/11 - External Relations. Manchuria

- 311 - Western Samoa
  - 311/1/2 - Sovereignty
  - 311/3/1 - Administration. General
  - 311/3/6 - Administration. Exchange of General Reports
  - 311/3/7 - Administration. Unrest
  - 311/9/10 - Administration. Report on Administration of Western Samoa. Commission comprising Verschaffelt, Park and Berendsen
- 344 - Finland
  - 344/2/1 - External Relations. USSR
- 350 - Germany
  - 350/5/1 - Foreign Policy. General
- 355 - Spain
  - 355/4/2 - Political Affairs. Spanish Civil War 1936-39
- 370 - Italy
  - 370/3/1 - Foreign Policy. General
- 412 - Bolivia
  - 412/2/1 - External Relations. Paraguay
- 455 - Singapore
  - 455/7/1 - Defence. General

#### Office Papers

- EA11 - Imperial Conferences, 1911-1937
  - 5 - Imperial War Conference 1918. Minutes of Imperial War Cabinet meetings 30-48
  - 11 - Imperial Conference 1923. Stenographic notes of meetings E(1923) 1-16
  - 35 - Imperial Conference 1930. Minutes of committees on arbitration and disarmament E(AD)(30) 1-8
  - 37 - Imperial Conference 1930. New Zealand Delegates briefs 2A-2N
  - 53 - Imperial Conference 1935. Meeting of British Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 1935. Proceedings and memoranda
  - 68 - Imperial Conference 1937. New Zealand Delegates briefs Foreign Affairs, Europe I
  - 70 - Imperial Conference 1937. New Zealand Delegates briefs Foreign Affairs, Outside Europe II
- EA31 - Peace Conference Press Cuttings, 1918-21
  - 1 - Dec 1918-Jan 1919
  - 3 - Mar 1919-Apr 1919
  - 5 - May 1919-Jun 1919

#### Governor-General of New Zealand

- G2 - Confidential Inwards Despatches from the Secretary of State
  - 51 - 31 Jul 1919-16 Apr 1920
  - 52 - 22 Apr 1920-26 Oct 1920
  - 61 - 5 Aug 1924-29 Dec 1924
  - 62 - 6 Jan 1925-20 Apr 1925
  - 63 - 27 Apr 1925-18 Aug 1925

- G5 - Telegrams to and from the Secretary of State
  - 21 - 31 Jan 1920-2 May 1920
  - 101 - 21 Mar 1924-6 Feb 1925
- G40 - Imperial Conferences
  - 2 - Imperial War Conferences 1917, 1918. Imperial Conference 1921
  - 3 - Imperial Conference 1921, 1923
  - 4 - Imperial Conference 1923. BED 81st-92nd Conferences 1924. Imperial Conference 1926
  - 5 - Imperial Conference 1926
  - 6 - Imperial Conference 1930
  - 7 - Imperial Conference 1930
  - 8 - Imperial Conference 1937
  - 10 - Colonial Defence Committee and Committee of Imperial Defence Papers 1909-1924
- G44 - Peace Treaty Discussions and British and Foreign Affairs
  - 1 - 7 Jan 1919-3 Jun 1921
- G48 - Classified Office Files
  - D/6 - Defence Conference, Wellington, April 1939
  - GG/46 - Method of Communication between Governor-General & Prime Minister(Institution of Imperial Affairs Branch)
  - I/5 - Imperial Relations
  - N/35 - Naval. Singapore Base
  - O/1 - Permanent Court of International Justice - Optional Clause
  - S/8 - Samoa - Mandate - Nationality and Status of Inhabitants including Native Petition 1921
  - S/17 - Samoa - agitation in up to end of 1928 - newspaper cuttings etc; correspondence between Administrator and External Affairs Department - report of Royal Commission concerning the Administration of Western Samoa
  - S/17(1) - Samoa - agitation from 1929 - includes petition to His Majesty the King
- G49 - Miscellaneous Office Papers
  - 42 - Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs: Czechoslovakia, memoranda, correspondence and records of meetings Mar-Oct 1938
  - 52 - Correspondence on Manifesto of the Four Colonels and other Miscellaneous Defence Matters, 1911-43

#### Department of Internal Affairs

- IA1 - Registered Files
  - 181/9/10 - War History. Departmental Histories. Foreign Policy

#### Island Territories Department

- IT1 - Registered Files(Originally Department of External Affairs files, they were transferred to Island Territories in 1943.)
  - 1/23/6 - Governor-General's Visit to Samoa 1926
  - 1/23/8 - Mau Agitation: General
  - 1/32 - Report by Colonel Tate on Administration, Samoa, 1923
  - 1/33/1 - Administration. Private correspondence between Sir G. S. Richardson, Administrator, and Sir Francis Bell, Minister of External Affairs

- 1/45 - Petition: From Lagaaia and other Samoans to House of Representatives, 1927 (Dealt with by Samoan Joint Petition Enquiry Committee)
- 1/46 - Appointment of Samoan Commission to investigate cause etc. of agitation in Samoa 1926-27
- 1/49 - Messers Verschaffelt, Park and Berendsen. Visit to Samoa Dec 1928. Report and General
- 1/49/1 - V-P-B Report: Newspaper comments on
- 1/51 - Petition: From Rev. A.J. Greenwood to Permanent Mandates Commission, 1930
- 1/52 - Petition: From the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Sep 1930
- 1/54 - Petition: To League of Nations 6 Oct 1930; From E.W. Gurr and W.O. Cooper
- 1/58 - Petition: From O.F. Nelson to League of Nations, 1930
- 1/59 - Petition: From O.F. Nelson to League of Nations, 1928
- 1/61 - Petition: From Samoans to League of Nations, 1928 (Signed by approximately 7,350 Samoans)
- 1/63 - Petition: From the 'Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society' to the League of Nations, 1927 & 1928
- 1/64 - Petition: From Newton Rowe to League of Nations, 1927
- 1/65 - Visit of Parliamentary representatives, 1936. 'Goodwill Delegation'
- 2/9 - Administration. Reports on Samoan affairs for information of Governor-General (Publications for Governor-General)
- 22/1 - External Affairs Department: To deal with Imperial despatches
- 25/1/1 - Mandate Report 1921
- 25/1/2 - Mandates: General file
- 25/1/10 - Mandates: Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations
- 25/1/18 - Mandates: Land titles and security for loans to Mandated Territories
- 25/1/23 - Permanent Mandates Commission. Discussion of Samoan Annual Reports
  - 25/2 - Mandate Report 1922
  - 25/6 - Mandate Report 1926
  - 25/9 - Annual Report Western Samoa 1929
  - 25/10 - Samoa: Annual Report 1929-30
  - 25/11 - League of Nations: Land tenure in mandated territories. State domain
  - 25/13 - Mandates: Questionnaire by Permanent Mandates Commission for annual reports. Hearing of petitioners
  - 25/14 - Mandates: Action by Permanent Mandates Commission 1928 re Samoa situation
  - 25/15 - League of Nations. Permanent Mandates Commission. Forced Labour
  - 25/16 - Samoan Annual Report: 1930/31
  - 25/17 - Samoan Annual Report: 1931/32
  - 25/18 - Annual Report 1933
  - 25/21 - Annual Report 1934-35
  - 25/24 - Annual Report 1938 Samoan Administration
- 37/2 - Newspaper extracts: Supply for Samoa from New Zealand Press

- 37/3 - Samoa: Newspaper extracts
- 61/19 - Reparation Estates - General file
- 67/12/2 - Constitution of Samoa
- 67/12/57 - League of Nations. Appointment of New Zealand Representative Mr J.D. Gray
- 79/73 - Sir James Allen(Personal)
- 79/76 - Colonel J.W. Hutchen, Secretary, Samoan Administration: Personal Correspondence with
- 79/78 - General Richardson: Private Correspondence with
- 79/86 - Private Correspondence with J.D. Gray, Secretary, External Affairs

#### Labour Department

- L1 - Registered Files
  - 6/36/11 - Miscellaneous. International Labour Organisation. Sessions: Minutes of Governing Body

#### Navy Department

- N1 - Registered Subject Files 1913-1958
  - 22/10/3 - Court-Martials, Conferences etc. League of Nations... Disarmament Matters Affecting New Zealand

#### Prime Minister's Department

- PM9 - F.D. Thomson's Papers during W. Massey's term as Prime Minister
  - 2 - Formal Government Matters. Official correspondence and telegrams to Massey, Nov 1919-Dec 1919
  - 4 - Washington Conference 1921-22. Correspondence and papers on arrangements and negotiations
  - 8 - Reform Party Matters. Political Matters - New Zealand. Private File Jan-Jun 1919
  - 49 - Miscellaneous Papers. Massey to D.H. Guthrie M.P., 3 Mar 1919
- PM16:1 - Correspondence - Jordan/Fraser/Savage 1936-40
- PM24 - New Zealand and the World, 1920s-1950s
  - 5/1 - Other. Outlawing war: clippings 1927-8 (file PMIA 1/101/1)
  - 5/2 - Other. Japan, 1929-43 (file 1/58/1)

#### Treasury Department

- T1 - Registered Files
  - 52/702 - National Expenditure Commission. Minutes and General File
  - 52/731 - World Monetary Economic Conference. London 1933

#### Miscellaneous Papers

- Misc 16 - Visit of Sir Maurice Hankey to Wellington 1934

## B PRIVATE PAPERS AND MEMOIRS

- Allen, Hon. James, Papers. National Archives. Wellington
- Berendsen, Carl A. Reminiscences of an Ambassador. 5 vol typescript. Ministry of External Relations and Trade. Wellington
- Campbell, Richard M., Papers. MS 1900. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Coates, J. Gordon, Papers. MS 1785. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Condliffe, John B. Autobiography 1891-1969. 3 vol typescript. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Jordan, Sir William J., Papers. MS A-178. University of Auckland Library. Auckland
- Lloyd George, David, Papers 1903-1944. Micro MS 404(House of Lords Record Office). Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Long, Walter, Papers 1913-1923. Micro MS 616(Wiltshire County Record Office). Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Massey, William F., Papers. MS 1398. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Nash, Sir Walter, Papers. National Archives. Wellington
- New Zealand Labour Party Papers. MS 270. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- New Zealand National Party Papers. MS 1096. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington
- Tate, Robert W., Papers. MS 264. Alexander Turnbull Library. Wellington

2 PUBLISHED

- Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1919-1946  
British Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons. 5th Series, 1936-1938
- Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49. Neale, R.G.(ed) 2 vols. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975-1976
- Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series, V. Woodward, E.L. & Butler, R.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954
- \_\_\_\_\_. Series 1a, VI. Medlicott, W.N., Dakin, D. & Lambert, M.E.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2nd Series, IX. Butler, R., Dakin, D. & Lambert, M.E.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2nd Series, XI-XVI. Medlicott, W.N., Dakin, D. & Lambert, M.E.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970-1977
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2nd Series, XVIII-XXI. Medlicott, W.N., Dakin, D. & Bennett, G.(eds) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980-1984
- Documents on Canadian External Relations. II-VI. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1969-1972



- Documents on International Affairs, 1928-1931. Wheeler-Bennett, J.W.  
(ed) London: Oxford University Press, 1929-1932
- League of Nations. Official Journal. Minutes of the Council, 1920-  
1939 (General Assembly Library. Wellington)
- . Records of the Assembly, 1920-  
1946 (General Assembly Library. Wellington)
- League of Nations. Permanent Mandates Commission. Minutes, 1921-1939  
(General Assembly Library. Wellington)
- Lee, J.A. The John A. Lee Diaries 1936-40. Christchurch: Whitcoulls,  
1981
- My Dear P.M.: R.G. Casey's Letters to S.M. Bruce 1924-1929. Hudson,  
W.J. & North, J.(eds) Canberra: Australian Government Publishing  
Service, 1980
- New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 1918-1945
- Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. III.  
Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943
- The Leo Amery Diaries. I. Barnes, J. & Nicholson, D.(eds) London:  
Hutchinson, 1980
- United Federation of Labour 6th Annual Conference/New Zealand Labour  
Party 3rd Annual Conference. Wellington. July 1919. Wellington:  
Maoriland Worker Co, 1919

## SECONDARY SOURCES

1 PUBLISHED

## A BOOKS

- Andrews, E.M. Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crises 1935-1939. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1970
- Avon, Earl of. The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators. London: Cassel, 1962
- Barros, J. Betrayal From Within: Joseph Avenol, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, 1933-1940. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969
- \_\_\_\_\_. Office Without Power: Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond 1919-1933. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979
- Beaglehole, J.C. New Zealand: A Short History. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936
- Bendiner, E. A Time for Angels. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975
- Bennett, B.S. New Zealand's Moral Foreign Policy 1935-1939: The Promotion of Collective Security Through the League of Nations. Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1988
- Birn, D.S. The League of Nations Union 1918-1945. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981
- Bissell, C. The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986

- Borden, H.(ed) Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1938
- Brown, B. The Rise of New Zealand Labour: A History of the New Zealand Labour Party from 1916 to 1940. Wellington: Price Milburn, 1962
- Burdon, R.M. The New Dominion: A Social and Political History of New Zealand 1918-39. Wellington, Reed, 1965
- Burton, M.E. The Assembly of the League of Nations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941
- Carlton, D. MacDonald Versus Henderson: The Foreign Policy of the Second Labour Government. London: Macmillan, 1970
- Carter, G.M. The British Commonwealth and International Security: The Role of the Dominions 1919-1939. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947
- Cecil, Viscount. A Great Experiment. London: Jonathan Cape, 1941
- Condliffe, J.B. New Zealand in the Making: A Survey of Economic and Social Development. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930
- Davidson, J.W. Samoa Mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1967
- Dawson, R.M. William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography 1874-1923. I. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958
- Dugdale, B.E.C. Arthur James Balfour. 2 vols. London: Hutchinson, 1936
- Edwards, J. The British Government and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. London: Macmillan, 1979
- Edwards, P.G. Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1949. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983
- Egerton, G.W. Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978
- Field, M.J. Mau: Samoa's Struggle Against New Zealand Oppression. Wellington: Reed, 1984
- Fitzhardinge, L.F. The Little Digger 1914-1952: William Morris Hughes A Political Biography. II. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1979
- Garner, J. The Commonwealth Office 1925-68. London: Heinemann, 1978
- Glazebrook, G.P. Canada at the Paris Peace Conference. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942
- Grant, D. Out in the Cold: Pacifists and Conscientious Objectors in New Zealand during World War II. Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986
- Groom, J.(ed) Nation Building in Australia: The Life and Work of Sir Littleton Ernest Groom. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941
- Gustafson, B. From the Cradle to the Grave: A Biography of Michael Joseph Savage. Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986
- Hall, H.D. Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship. London: Stevens & Sons, 1948
- Hancock, W.K. Smuts: The Fields of Force 1919-1950. II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968
- Harkness, D.W. The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-31. London: Macmillan, 1969
- Haslam, E.P. Social Legislation in New Zealand: A Comparison. Auckland University College Economics Reprint No.1. Auckland: Unicorn Press, 1936
- Hasluck, P. The Government and the People 1939-1941. (Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series 4, Civil, Vol.1) Canberra: Australian War Memorial, reprinted 1956
- Henig, R.B.(ed) The League of Nations. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1973

- Holland, R.F. Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance 1918-1939. London: Macmillan, 1981
- Hudson, M.O. The Permanent Court of International Justice; A Treatise. New York: Macmillan, 1934
- Hudson, W.J. Australia and the League of Nations. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980
- Keesing, F.M. Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934
- League of Nations Secretariat. Ten Years of World Co-operation. Geneva: League Secretariat, 1930
- Lee, B.A. Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939: A Study in the Dilemmas of British Decline. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973
- Lee, J.A. Rhetoric at the Red Dawn. Auckland: Collins, 1965
- Lissington, M.P. New Zealand and Japan 1900-1941. Wellington: Government Printer, 1972
- Lloyd George, D. The Truth About the Peace Treaties. 2 vols. London: Victor Gollancz, 1938
- Louis, W.R. Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919. London: Oxford University Press, 1967
- Macdonald, B. Massey's Imperialism and the Politics of Phosphate. Massey Memorial Lecture 1982. Massey University Occasional Publication No.7
- McGibbon, I.C. Blue-water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-1942. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1981
- McIntyre, W.D. New Zealand Prepares for War: Defence Policy 1919-39. Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, 1988
- McIntock, A.H.(ed) An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. 3 vols. Wellington: Government Printer, 1966
- Manning, C.A.W. The Policies of the British Dominions in the League of Nations. London: Oxford University Press, 1932
- Mansergh, N. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of External Policy 1931-1939. London: Oxford University Press, 1952
- Marston, F.S. The Peace Conference of 1919. London: Oxford University Press, 1944
- Massey, V. What's Past is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, CH. London: Macmillan, 1963
- Meleisea, M. The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987
- Middlemas, K. Diplomacy of Illusion. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972
- Miller, D.H. The Drafting of the Covenant. 2 vols. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928
- Miller, K.E. Socialism and Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice in Britain to 1931. The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1967
- Milner, I.F.G. New Zealand's Interests and Policies in the Far East. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1939
- Nash, W. New Zealand: A Working Democracy. Melbourne: George Jaboor, 1943
- Naylor, J.F. Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969
- Neatby, H.B. William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Lonely Heights 1924-1932. II. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963

- . William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity 1932-1939. III. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976
- New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. Contemporary New Zealand. Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1938
- Nish, I.H. Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23. London: Athlone Press, 1972
- Northedge, F.S. The League of Nations: Its Life and Times 1920-1946. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986
- O'Farrell, P.J. Harry Holland: Militant Socialist. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1964
- Oliver, W.H. & Williams, B.R.(eds) The Oxford History of New Zealand. Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981
- Orde, A. Great Britain and International Security 1920-1926. London: Royal Historical Society, 1978
- Ovendale, R. 'Appeasement' and the English Speaking World. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975
- Peters, A.R. Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office 1931-1938. New York: Gower, 1986
- Petersen, G.C.(ed) Who's Who in New Zealand. 7th ed. Wellington: Reed, 1961
- Petrie, Sir C. The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Sir Austen Chamberlain. 2 vols. London: Cassel, 1940
- Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E.F. The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972
- Roskill, S. Hankey: Man of Secrets. 3 vols. London: Collins, 1970-1974
- Rovine, A.W. The First Fifty Years: The Secretary-General in World Politics 1920-1970. Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1970
- Scholefield, G.H.(ed) Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific. 3rd ed. Wellington: Rangatira Press, 1932
- . Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific. 4th ed. Wellington: L.T. Watkins, 1941
- Scott, G. The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations. London: Hutchinson, 1973
- Sinclair, K. A History of New Zealand. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969
- . Walter Nash. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1976
- Spartalis, P. The Diplomatic Battles of Billy Hughes. Sydney: Hale & Tremonger, 1983
- Stewart, W.D. The Right Honourable Sir Francis H.D. Bell PC, GCMG, KC: His Life and Times. Wellington: Butterworth, 1937
- Sutch, W.B. The Quest for Security in New Zealand 1840 to 1966. Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1966
- Temperley, A.C. The Whispering Gallery of Europe. London: Collins, 1939
- Temperley, H.W.V.(ed) A History of the Peace Conference of Paris. VI. London: Henry Frowde & Hodder & Stoughton, 1924
- Thorn, J. Peter Fraser: New Zealand's Wartime Prime Minister. London: Odhams Press, 1952
- Thorne, C. The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972
- Tillman, S.P. Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961

- Toynbee, A.J. Survey of International Affairs, 1924-1932. London: Oxford University Press, 1926-1933
- Veatch, R. Canada and the League of Nations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975
- Walters, F.P. A History of the League of Nations. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1952
- Wigley, P.G. Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British-Canadian Relations 1917-1926. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977
- Williams, M. & Macdonald, B. The Phosphateers. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985
- Wilson, O. An Outsider Looks Back: Reflections on Experience. Wellington: Port Nicholson Press, 1982
- Wood, F.L.W. The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1958
- Zimmern, A. The League of Nations and the Rule of Law 1918-1935. London: Macmillan, 1936

## B ARTICLES

- Aarons, F. What the League of Nations Means to Australia. In Australian Policies, Political and Strategic. Australian Supplementary Papers D.1-4. Sydney: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1938
- Andrews, E.M. The Great Temptation: The Australian Government and the Sale of Arms to China During the Manchurian Crisis, 1931-33. Australian Journal of Politics and History. 23.3, Dec 1977, pp.346-359
- Boyd, M. A Footnote on New Zealand's Attitude to Dominion Status 1919-1921. Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies. 3.1, Mar 1965, pp.64-70
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Record in Western Samoa to 1945. In Ross, A.(ed) New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1969
- \_\_\_\_\_. Racial Attitudes of New Zealand Officials in Western Samoa. New Zealand Journal of History. 21.2, Apr 1987, pp.139-155
- Carlton, D. The Dominions and British Policy in the Abyssinian Crisis. In Collected Seminar Papers on the Dominions Between the Wars. University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 13, Oct 1970-Mar 1971 (also published in Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. 1.1, Oct 1972, pp.59-77)
- Egerton, G.W. Great Britain and the League of Nations: Collective Security as Myth and History. In The League of Nations in Retrospect: Proceedings of the Symposium. Geneva, 6-9 Nov 1980. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1983
- Gardner, W.J. The Rise of W.F. Massey, 1891-1912. Political Science. 13.1, Mar 1961, pp.3-30
- \_\_\_\_\_. W.F. Massey in Power. Political Science. 13.2, Sep 1961, pp.3-30
- \_\_\_\_\_. Massey - The Farmer Politician. In New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation. V. Auckland: Paul Hamlyn, 1971, pp.1965-1970

- Hillmer, N. The Foreign Office, the Dominions and the Diplomatic Unity of the Empire, 1925-29. In Dilks, D.(ed) Retreat From Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century. I. London: Macmillan, 1981
- McIntosh, Sir A. Origins of the Department of External Affairs and the Formulation of an Independent Foreign Policy. In New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. New Zealand in World Affairs. I. Wellington: Price Milburn, 1977
- McKinlay, A.D. The New Zealand Metropolitan Press. Pacific Affairs. 6.1, Jan 1933, pp.1-16
- Moore, W.H. The Dominions of the British Commonwealth in the League of Nations. International Affairs. 10.3, May 1931, pp.372-391
- Noonan, R. George Forbes: The Inflexible Conservative. In New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation. VI. Auckland: Paul Hamlyn, 1971, pp.2281-2286
- O'Connor, P.S. Some Political Preoccupations of Mr Massey, 1918-20. Political Science. 18.2, Sep 1966, pp.16-38
- Peters, K. New Zealand's Attitudes to the Reform of the League of Nations: The Background to the Memorandum to the Secretary-General, 16 July 1936. New Zealand Journal of History. 6.1, Apr 1972, pp.81-98
- Ross, A. Reluctant Dominion or Dutiful Daughter? New Zealand and the Commonwealth in the Inter-war Years. In Collected Seminar Papers on the Dominions Between the Wars. University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 13, Oct 1970-Mar 1971 (also published in Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies. 10.1, Mar 1972, pp.28-44)
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Chanak Crisis. In New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation. VI. Auckland: Paul Hamlyn, 1971, pp.2152-2156
- \_\_\_\_\_. New Zealand and the Commonwealth to 1939. In The Commonwealth: Its Past, Present and Future. Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1973
- Sharpe, M. Anzac Day in New Zealand 1916-1939. New Zealand Journal of History. 15.2, Oct 1981, pp.97-114
- Snelling, R.C. Peacemaking, 1919: Australia, New Zealand and the British Empire Delegation at Versailles. Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. 4.1, Oct 1975, pp.15-28
- Tamchina, R. In Search of Common Causes: The Imperial Conference of 1937. Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. 1.1, Oct 1972, pp.79-105
- Trotter, A. Personality in Foreign Policy: Sir Carl Berendsen in Washington. New Zealand Journal of History. 20.2, Nov 1986, pp.167-180
- Wilson, J.V. New Zealand's Participation in International Organisations. In Larkin, T.C.(ed) New Zealand's External Relations. Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962
- Winkler, H.R. Arthur Henderson. In Craig, G.A. & Gilbert, F.(eds) The Diplomats 1919-1939. II. New York: Atheneum, 1968
- New Zealand. The Round Table. 59, Jun 1925, pp.617-635

2 UNPUBLISHED

## A THESES, RESEARCH ESSAYS AND WAR NARRATIVES

- Angus, B. Social Reactions to Pre-War Incidents. War Narrative. 1948. (National Archives. Wellington)
- Attwood, B.M. Apostles of Peace: The New Zealand League of Nations Union. M.Phil. Research Essay, University of Auckland, 1979
- Lissington, M.P. New Zealand and Japan - Relations until December 1941. War Narrative. 1948. (National Archives. Wellington)
- O'Shea, J.D. New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War. War Narrative. 1947. (National Archives. Wellington)
- \_\_\_\_\_. New Zealand's Part in the Establishment of an International Security Organisation. I. War Narrative. 1949-1950 (National Archives. Wellington)
- Skudder, S.M. 'Bringing It Home': New Zealand Responses to the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. PhD. Thesis, University of Waikato, 1986
- Templeton, M. Some Notes on the Development of the Prime Minister's Department. War Narrative. 1948. (National Archives. Wellington)
- Witheford, H. New Zealanders and the War. War Narrative. 1951. (National Archives. Wellington)
- \_\_\_\_\_. Pre-War Labour Attitude to War. War Narrative. 1948. (National Archives. Wellington)